263
Cur/Bri
67957

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY–400 023.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

BRIEF REMARKS

ON THE

History, Authority, and Use,

OF THE

SABBATH.

67957

BY

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

A 4 3

Dominicum servavi?
Christianus sum; intermittere non possum.
ACTS OF THE MARTYRS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL;
AND C. J. [illegible] E. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; AND
[illegible] PALL-MALL.
MDCCCXXXI.

some valuable information, which was not before equally familiar to me, I consider it right to persevere in presenting to my fellow Christians, *of every name*, this humble effort for their good.

Persons who are desirous of promoting the religious welfare of the community, occupy in the present day a variety of stations, and their influence extends itself in very different directions. How important then that each should perform his own part faithfully, and thus that *all* should be labouring in the common cause of righteousness and truth!

Among the early Christians, the first day of the week was almost universally called *the Lord's day*—an appellation for which we have apostolic authority in the book of Revelation. Since, however, this title includes the sacred name, the familiar use of it appears to be undesirable; and I have therefore more usually adopted the term *sabbath day*. In applying to the Christian's day of rest and worship, the name of SABBATH, I

consider that I am fully justified, both by the simple meaning of the word, and by the express language of the fourth commandment.

Should the evidences which I am about to adduce, be the means of convincing any doubtful mind of the divine authority of this institution, or of quickening the diligence of any of my readers in the observance of its duties, I shall regard it as a fresh call for gratitude to that Being, without whose blessing no labour of Christian love can ever prosper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER 1.—ON THE PATRIARCHAL SABBATH 1

CHAPTER 2.—ON THE MOSAIC SABBATH..... 29

CHAPTER 3.—ON THE JEWISH SABBATH AT THE CHRISTIAN ERA 43

CHAPTER 4.—ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH ... 63

CONCLUSION 88

BRIEF REMARKS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE PATRIARCHAL SABBATH.

THE moral, and therefore permanent, nature of that divine institution which devotes every seventh day to a holy rest, may be fairly deduced from the earliest record relating to the subject. The history of the glorious works which occupied, in succession, the six days of creation, is completed by the following description of the FIRST SABBATH.[1]

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sancti-

[1] The name sabbath, (as I presume most of my readers are aware,) properly signifies *rest*. The Hebrew substantive שַׁבָּת is obviously from a root formed of the same consonants, and signifying "*to cease from labour.*" *Vide Simonis Lex.*

fied it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."[1]

There are two points in this passage which mark the moral and spiritual character of the sabbath. The first is, that God *blessed* and *sanctified* the seventh day. He bestowed upon it a blessing above that of other days; and, therefore, in all generations, those who rightly observed it were to be blessed in the use of it; and he also sanctified it; by which we are to understand that he *set it apart*, or *consecrated it to religious purposes*.

The Jewish Talmudists pretend that this consecration of the seventh day was simply *prospective*,—that the mention of it, in this passage, is nothing more than an allusion to a law which was long afterwards to be enacted for the benefit of the Israelites alone. The currency of such an opinion among these doctors is easily explained; for the Jews have ever been jealous of admitting the Gentiles to a participation in their religious polity. Had they allowed that the sabbath was instituted in the first age of the world, they could not have denied that it was a provision of divine wisdom and mercy for the use of *all* mankind; but by fixing its earliest origin at the time of the Exodus, they restricted this ordinance to themselves. Accordingly, the observance of the sabbath was forbidden to the "proselytes of the gate," as those Gentiles were called who believed in the truth of the Israelitish theology, but did not (as it were) *make themselves Jews*

[1] Gen. ii, 1—3.

by adopting all the Mosaic ceremonies. The Talmudists decided that no Gentiles were authorised to observe that holy day, except the proselytes of justice—persons who conformed, in every other respect, to the ritual of Judaism.[2]

Now, although the opinion of the Talmudists respecting this passage, has been adopted by some learned men who were much accustomed to the perusal of their works, (for instance, John Selden and Dr. Gill,) it appears to rest on a very weak foundation. Every plain reader of Scripture must, I think, understand from these verses, that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, immediately after the creation; and, if he *then* blessed and sanctified it, common sense forbids our supposing that no effect was to be produced by his doing so, except on one small division of mankind, *after the lapse of two thousand five hundred years*. We may surely rather conclude from our premises, that the Creator at once set the day apart for holy uses, and graciously bestowed the blessing of the sabbatical institution *on the whole human race*.

There is, however, a second reason suggested by this passage of Scripture for our regarding the sabbath as a moral and spiritual institution; namely, that it was founded on a divine pattern,—on the *example of God himself*. God sanctified the seventh day, or set it apart for holy uses, "BECAUSE in it he had rested from all his work[3] which God created and made."

[2] *Vide Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. juxta disciplinam Ebræorum*, lib. iii, cap. 9, 10.

[3] Gen. ii, 3.

Again we read in Exod. xx, 11.—"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it." God created man in his "own image," after his "likeness,"[1] from which expressions it may be inferred that man, in a variety of respects, and in a certain degree, was to be conformed to the attributes of God. Endued with the faculty of reason, with power over all inferior animals, with an immortal soul, and above all, with moral virtues, he was destined to afford an infinitely diminished, yet lively, representation of the Author of his being. Now the keeping of the sabbath was one of those particulars of conduct, by the observance of which man was to be characterised, *after the model of his Creator.* It cannot, I think, be conceived, that a duty required of us, on this peculiar ground—a duty so plainly contributing to the maintenance in man of the *image* of God—can be otherwise than of universal and permanent obligation.

We cannot, indeed, form any just notion of the sabbath of Jehovah—what was the nature of the rest of God, or what the period through which it might extend. Yet this rest, *as a model*, is presented to our notice in an intelligible shape, and man is commanded to cease from labour every seventh day, after the example of his Maker. And further, although

[1] Gen. i, 26.

we are not aware what relation the sabbath of Jehovah might have to his moral attributes, it is unquestionably true that the observance of the sabbath is required of *man*, as a moral and spiritual being—one who is accountable for all his actions, and who has eternal interests at stake.

In order to form a just view of the moral importance of the institution, we need only call to mind, that man, in this state of probation, is encompassed with things, temporal in their nature, which meet his senses and engross his attention; that he has within him, nevertheless, an immortal part, which, amidst all these perishing scenes, is now to be prepared for an invisible and eternal world. How evident is it, therefore, in the very nature of things, that a proportion of our *time* must be set apart for this object—not only that every day should bring with it its hour of private devotion—not only that a spirit of piety should pervade the whole business of life—but that at some frequently recurring period, our temporal engagements should entirely cease, and opportunity be given to the soul to commune at leisure with its Creator, and to deal deliberately with the eternal future! The Jews themselves were well aware that the bodily rest ordained on the sabbath, was essential to the strength and refreshment of the mind, which, thus invigorated, was to apply its undivided powers to holy things. "This," says one of their doctors, "is the sanctification of the sabbath, that on that day the human

mind should fix itself on no worldly business, but only on *things divine*." [5]

It may be objected, that these remarks are applicable only to persons who enjoy the light of revelation; because merely natural religion does not, with clearness, teach us the doctrine of our immortality, and, therefore, makes no demand on our reason for the observance of a sabbath. To this objection it is a sufficient answer, that God *did* reveal his truth to our first parents and their immediate descendants—that although, therefore, our fallen race soon sunk into a state of corruption, and ignorance of their Creator, pure religion, and *its accompanying sabbath*, were nevertheless intended for all mankind. They are, and ever were, of universal applicability to our species.

Innocent as our first parents were before the fall, and at peace with God, we may conclude that even for them the dedication of every seventh day to a holy rest, was both a duty and a privilege. They must surely have delighted in the frequent recurrence of an interval, which was to be devoted to uninterrupted communion with God, and to the joyful remembrance of their own immortality. But for man in the fall, who must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; whose affections naturally tend only to earthly and sensual things; who is laden with innumerable infirmities and is corrupt at core; whose passage to the eternal

[5] *Aben Ezra, apud Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. ii, c. 18.

world lies through *death*—for such a being, under such circumstances—a weekly sabbath of rest and devotion may well be deemed *indispensable*. This, like every other part of the moral law of God, is precisely adapted to our need, and the observance of it is essential to our virtue and happiness.

There is another point of view in which the keeping of the sabbath must be regarded as a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and as necessary to the formation in man of the *religious character*. *It is an act of faith* in Jehovah; who will be sure to provide for the temporal as well as spiritual wants of those who serve him. Man is required to cease from his labour every seventh day; and thus is made to feel, that, even for the supply of his bodily need, he may not depend exclusively on his own exertions. By the silent admonition of a weekly sabbath he is taught to place a calm reliance on that glorious Being who, of his own free bounty, feeds the sparrow and provides for man.

The existing record that God, after finishing the work of creation, set apart the seventh day for holy uses, together with the reasonableness and necessity of the service, affords a strong presumption, that amidst the general corruption of mankind, this institution continued to be observed, both before and after the flood, by the Patriarchal church. Of the existence of such a church from the date of the creation to that of Moses, various hints are scattered over the book of Genesis. Brief and

undetailed (for the most part) as is this inspired history, it contains many incidental allusions to a system of worship—to a priesthood, places for worship, altars, sacrifices, prayers, and peculiar religious rites.[6] There were preachers also in those early days. The apostle Peter speaks of our Saviour's preaching by his spirit to the world before the flood;[7] and who can doubt that this was through the instrumentality of his appointed ministers? Accordingly the same apostle elsewhere calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness."[8]

Now for the maintenance of such a system of worship, a sabbath would appear to have been essential; nor does the absence, in the history of the Patriarchs, of any express mention of its observance, materially weaken the probability that, under these circumstances, *it was actually observed.* It is always to be remembered that the records of the Old Testament are in many parts extremely abridged, and that the silence of these narratives respecting any supposed fact which collateral evidence renders probable, affords scarcely any degree of evidence that such a fact was not real. We know that after the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, the law of Moses, and the sabbath as forming a part of it, were publicly recognised and in full force; yet no mention is made of the

6 Ample evidences on this subject are adduced by J. J. Blunt, in his useful little work "On the veracity of the Five Books of Moses."

7 1 Pet. iii, 19. 8 2 Pet. ii, 5.

sabbath in the book of Judges, the two books of Samuel, and the first book of Kings, which comprise a period of five hundred years. Although circumcision was a ceremony of marked importance during the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation, no mention is made of that rite in the whole history of the Bible, from the days of Joshua to those of John the Baptist.

The Patriarchal history does, however, contain an account of some circumstances, which afford us no insignificant hints that the sabbath was observed. Cain and Abel are described as offering their sacrifices to the Lord "*in process of time*" as our version has it, but as in the margin of that version, and in the Hebrew, "*at the end of days.*"[9] Now the only period of days before alluded to, is that of the week, and it is highly probable that this form of expression indicates nothing more, than that they made their offerings on the day which terminates the week—that is, *on the sabbath.*

Of the division of time into weeks we have a plain hint or two in the history of Noah. Jehovah says to Noah, "For *yet seven days*, (or yet a week,) and I will cause it to rain upon the earth," &c. Gen. vii, 4. Again, when Noah's dove, after finding "no rest for the sole of her foot," had been restored to the ark, we are informed that Noah stayed "*yet other seven days*" and sent her forth;

[9] Gen. iv, 3. מִקֵּץ יָמִים

and, on her return with the olive branch, he again waited for the same recognised period: "And he stayed *yet other seven days*, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more."[1]

It appears then that Noah reckoned his time by weeks, and that the seventh day of the week was to him, as well as to Cain and Abel, "*the end of days*." Such a division of time must surely have been founded on the tradition of the six days of creation, *ending with a day of rest*. Now since this tradition had passed down to Noah through a very small number of forefathers, who probably were all worshippers of Jehovah, it seems incredible that he could be unacquainted with the fact that the seventh day was hallowed; and equally so, that being acquainted with it, this "preacher of righteousness" should himself neglect the observance of the day.

The same practice would necessarily descend with the worship of the true God, in that line of Noah's posterity, in which God was pleased to preserve a visible church. We read of Abraham, that he "obeyed" the "voice" of God, and kept his "charge," his "commandments," his "statutes," and his "laws."[2] No wonder that Manasseh Ben Israel, a learned Dutch Jew, should infer from this passage that Abraham observed the sabbath;[3] for which of the charges, statutes, commandments, or laws of God was such a man more likely to

[1] Gen. viii, 10—12. [2] Gen. xxvi, 5.
[3] *Lib. de Creatione, in Selden.*

reverence and obey?[4] In a Jewish book called Bereshith Rabba it is asserted that the sabbath was kept by Jacob.[5] The same thing is also said by one of the Rabbins, of Joseph;[6] and the probability of these assertions appears not only from the plain reason of the case, but from the indications afforded in Scripture that both these Patriarchs were acquainted with the division of time into weeks. Jacob twice served Laban for Rachel "a week of years"—a period of which the reckoning was doubtless borrowed from that of the week of days.[7] And Joseph devoted "seven days," or in other words *a whole week*, to a public mourning for his father.[8] Aben Ezra, another learned Jew, presumes that Job kept the sabbath, because he offered sacrifice at the end of seven days,[9] and is there not good reason to suppose that the day "when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord" was[10] the day consecrated to worship—the day of the sabbath?[11]

The original use of the sabbath, and its authority, *independently of the Jewish law*, are however yet more clearly proved by a distinct and most emphatic recognition of it some time *before* the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai. Very soon after the Israelites had commenced their journey through the wil-

[4] *Vide Selden de Jure*, lib. iii. c. 18.
[5] *Parash* 79 *in Selden.*
[6] *Beckai ad Bereshith*, fol. 37, col. 4. *in Selden.*
[7] Gen. xxix, 27—20. [8] Gen. l, 10.
[9] Job i. 5. [11] Job i, 6. ii, 11.

derness, they were provided with the manna, which they gathered every morning. "And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, *this is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord* . . . . . and they laid it up till the morning as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, eat that to-day; *for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord*; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on *the seventh day, which is the sabbath*, there shall be none . . . . . See for that the *Lord hath given you the sabbath*, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day."[2]

There is a plain accordance between the declaration of Gen. ii, 3, that God *sanctified* the seventh day, and the remarkable fact that the manna—the miraculous gift of God—was doubled on the sixth day and stayed on the seventh. This fact, and the explanation given of it by Moses, were obviously intended to revive in the remembrance of the people, an already existing institution—to remind them of a religious duty, which although (possibly) forgotten during the period of their Egyptian bondage, had been cherished by their ances-

[2] Exod. xvi, 22—30.

tors, and had always formed a part of the system of true worship.*

The division of time into weeks was familiar to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and they were accustomed to distinguish the seven days, by the names of seven of their deities: viz. the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Eusebius has selected from the works of Porphyry, (one of the early enemies of Christianity) a very old Greek oracle, quoted by that writer, in which there is a distinct reference to this division and nomenclature. It is as follows:

"Invoke Mercury on his day,
And in like manner the Sun on a Sunday—
The Moon also when her day arrives,
And Saturn and Venus, each in their order."[b]

A similar custom is supposed to have been of great antiquity among the nations of the North of Europe, namely, the *Goths*, *Celts*, and *Sclavonians*. These nations probably derived this practice (as they did many others,

* The Talmudists parry this argument, by pretending that the first institution of the sabbath is alluded to in the preceding chapter; where after describing the sweetening of the waters at Marah, Moses says, "And there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them." Exod. xv. 25. It is obvious, however, that if the sabbath had been so very lately instituted, the rulers would have required no explanation of the doubling of the manna on the sixth day, and of the cessation of it on the seventh.

[b] Κληίζειν Ἑρμὴν μὲν Ἡέλιον κατὰ ταὐτὰ
Κυριεῦ Ἡελίου, μήνην δ' ὅτε τῆς δὲ παρεύῃ
Ἡμέρη, ἠδὲ Κρόνον ἠδ' ἐξῆς Ἀφροδίτην.
Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. v. cap. 14.

and much of their language) from the East; for there is reason to believe that the reckoning of time by weeks, and an idolatrous nomenclature of the days, were prevalent, in very ancient times, in that quarter of the globe; especially in *Chaldæa* and *Egypt*. Dion the Roman historian, says that the custom in question originated in Egypt, and from thence, at a more modern date, pervaded the whole world.[6] Grotius confirms its ancient origin in Egypt, by reference to Herodotus.[7]

Since this peculiar division of time agrees with no astronomical sign—certainly not with the changes in the appearance of the moon—and since it is improbable that the Egyptians, or any other nation of antiquity, should borrow it from so despised a people as the Israelites, we may conclude that it was founded on a tradition *respecting the original seven days*.[8] On this ground, it affords a collateral evidence of the facts recorded in the Mosaic history of the creation, and, among other facts, *of the hallowing of the seventh day*. That this circumstance, indeed, formed one feature of the tradition in question, is confirmed by a variety of evidence bearing expressly on the point.

Eusebius, in his "Evangelical Preparations,"

[6] Lib. 36. *Selden de Jure*, lib. ii. c. 19.

[7] *Herod.* lib. ii. *Grot. de Verit.* lib. i.

[8] If, Sir Isaac Newton supposes, the Egyptians borrowed their learning from the Edomites, the course of the tradition may be directly traced through Esau to the Patriarchs. *Chronology of Kingdoms*, p. 208.

has extracted a long passage from a work addressed by Aristobulus, a Jewish Platonic Philosopher, to one of the Ptolemies of Egypt, about 150 years before Christ.[9] The object of the Jew is to exalt the traditions and practices of his own nation, and to show that even the heathen held them sacred. After some allusion to the work of creation, he speaks of the authority and use of the seventh day. This he calls "the day of light and wisdom, in which the complete order of nature is contemplated"—a day bestowed on man, for the purpose of "divine philosophy." He then proceeds to cite passages from the works of Homer and Hesiod, in which the "seventh day" is described as "*sacred*."

"Sacred in the first place is the day of the new moon;

Sacred also are the fourth, and the seventh days."

"Again came the seventh day, the illustrious light of the sun."

"The seventh day then arrived—a sacred day."

Whether these passages are really to the point, is somewhat doubtful. Hesiod, it appears, classes the fourth and seventh days together, and as he also mentions the day of the

[9] *Euang. Præp.* lib. xiii, c. 12.

[1] Πρῶτον δνη, τετράς τε καὶ ἑβδόμη, ἱερὸν ἦμαρ·
Ἑβδομάτη δ' αὖθις, λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο.
Hesiod.

[2] Ἑβδομάτη δ' ἦκεν κατηλιθον, ἱερὸν ἦμαρ.
Homer.

"new moon," he may perhaps be here speaking of the days *of the month*: for the fourth day of every month is said to have been sacred to Mercury, and the seventh to Apollo.[3] With regard to Homer, there are many passages in his works which indicate that in his view, every passing day and night was *sacred*. The epithet *sacred*[4] is one which he was accustomed to lavish with a free, poetic, licence. From Linus, another ancient Greek poet, Aristobulus quotes some verses which are more applicable to his purpose—"All things in the starry heaven," says Linus, "are made in sevens, appearing in circles, as the years arise."[5] As it appears from this passage that his notion is that of a *perpetual rotation in sevens*, we may conclude that he refers *to each recurring seventh day*, when he writes as follows:—

"The seventh (day) is among good things,
The seventh (day) is the birth (day),
The seventh (day) is among chief things,
The seventh (day) is perfect."[6]

According to Clement of Alexandria, who repeats the argument of Aristobulus, much was said in Solon's elegies, (a work no longer extant,) respecting the divine character of the seventh day.[7]

[3] *Selden de Jure*, &c. lib. iii. cap. 17.
[4] ἱερός.
[5] Πάντα δὲ πάντα τέτυκται ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι
Ἐν κύκλοισι φανέντ' ἐπιτελλομένοις ἐνιαυτοῖς.
[6] Ἑβδόμη ἐν ἀγαθοῖς, καὶ ἑβδόμη ἐστὶ γενέθλη,
Ἑβδόμη ἐν πρώτοισι, καὶ ἑβδόμη ἐστὶ τελείη.
[7] *Strom.* lib. v.

Lucian[8] and Aulus Gellius[9] speak of the "seventh day" as one on which boys exchange their books for play. Suetonius mentions the "*sabbath*," as selected by Diogenes the grammarian at Rome, for his public disputations.[1] Tibullus describes the *day of Saturn*, i. e. "the seventh day of the week" as "sacred:" "Saturni aut sacrum me tenuisse diem."[2]

The title of Birth—or Birth (day) applied to the seventh day by Linus, (or according to Clement, by Callimachus) implies that it was the day on which the birth of the world was celebrated. Similar terms are used on the same subject by Philo, a Jewish Platonic philosopher, who lived in Egypt, and was contemporary with our Saviour. "When the whole world was completely formed," says this author, "according to the perfect nature of the number six, the Father glorified the succeeding day, being the seventh, praising it and calling it holy. For it is a holy day, not of one city or place only, but of all the world—a holy day which alone can justly be described as universal—the Birth day of the world!"[3] Whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for the

8 *In Pseudologist.*
1 *In Nerone*, 32.
9 Lib. xv, 11.
2 Eleg. 3, line 18.
3 Ἐπεὶ δ' ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐτελειοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ἓξάδος ἀριθμοῦ τελείαν φύσιν, τὴν ἑπιοῦσαν ἡμέραν ἑβδόμην ἐσέμνυνεν ὁ πατὴρ ἐπαινέσας, καὶ ἁγίαν προσεῖπεν· ἔστι γὰρ οὐ μιᾶς πόλεως ἢ χώρας ἑστὶν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ παντὸς (scil. κόσμου) ἣν κυρίως ἄξιον καὶ μόνην εὐάνθημον ὀνομάζειν, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου γενέθλιον.
De Mundi Opificio. Ed. Mangeli, tom. I, p. 21.

bombast or exaggeration of this writer, we cannot suppose that his statement respecting the acknowledged sanctity of the seventh day among the heathen nations, was without some foundation. That statement is moreover confirmed by the positive assertion of Josephus. "Great zeal has long been displayed by multitudes in the imitation of our worship, neither is there any city of the Greeks or among foreigners—not even one nation—into which the custom of observing the seventh day, *on which we rest*, has not found its way."[1]

Some of the earliest Christian fathers give a similar testimony. Theophilus, of Antioch, (A. D. 168,) speaks of the seventh day of the week as the day "which all men celebrate."[2] Clement, of Alexandria, (A. D. 199,) says that "the Greeks as well as the Hebrews, considered as sacred the seventh day, according to the recurrence of which, there is a rotation of all things living and growing."[3] Tertullian (A. D. 200,) says, that it was a custom among the Gentiles to devote *Saturday* to ease and feasting.[4]

[illegible]

[1] Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ πλήθουσιν ἤδη πολὺ [illegible] γέγονεν ἐκ μακροῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐσεβείας· οὐ [illegible] οὐ πόλις Ἑλλήνων οὐδητισοῦν, οὐδὲ βάρβαρος, [illegible] ἔθνος, ἵνα μὴ τὸ τῆς ἑβδομάδος ἦν ἀργοῦμεν, [illegible] τὸ ἔθος οὐ διαπεφοίτηκε. *Contra Apion.* lib. [illegible]

[2] ἣν πάντες ἄνθρωποι ἑορτάζουσι. lib. [illegible]

[3] καθ' ἣν ὁ πᾶς κόσμος κυκλεῖται τῶν [illegible] των καὶ ζώντων.

[4] Diem Saturni otio et victui decernunt. *Apolog.*

We appear, then, to be in possession of sufficient evidence, that the reckoning of time by weeks, among the heathen—a practice of which the antiquity is beyond tracing—was accompanied by a notion more or less distinct, that the seventh day was *holy*. Now such a notion, as well as the weekly division itself, is surely to be ascribed rather to an original tradition, than to the example of the Jews—a people who, before their dispersion, were so little known, and after it, so little honoured.

That the sabbatical institution, therefore, forms part of the law of God, as it was originally revealed to mankind, we may conclude, for the following reasons:

First. Because the sacred historian immediately after describing the six days' work of creation, and the resting of the Creator on the seventh day, expressly declares that God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; that is, devoted it to holy purposes.

Secondly. Because the institution is founded on a divine pattern,—on the recorded example of the Almighty himself.

Thirdly. Because in the very nature of things, such an institution is necessary for the due and orderly worship of our Creator, and for the effectual culture of our immortal part; and thus, like that pure theology from which it is inseparable, it is applicable to the needs of all mankind, in all ages.

Fourthly. Because it involves an acceptable exercise of faith in God, who is pleased to

provide for the wants of his children, without requiring either from themselves, or from the inferior creatures over which they rule, a perpetual succession of days of labour.

Fifthly. Because from a variety of hints contained in the history of the Patriarchs, as well as from the fact, that the observance of the sabbath was enjoined on the Israelites as a custom already recognised, it may be inferred that previously to the Jewish law, this institution was observed by the servants of Jehovah, both before and after the flood.

Sixthly. Because the division of time into weeks, prevailing among the heathen, especially among Eastern nations, (connected as it was with a notion that the seventh day of the week was holy,) confirms the antiquity and *original authority* of the sabbath.

In conclusion, it is necessary for us plainly to distinguish between the dictates of true religion and those of superstition, in reference to our present subject. I would suggest that it is unscriptural, and therefore superstitious to imagine that a superior sanctity actually attaches to any one day of the revolving week over others. As with Homer of old every passing day and night was sacred, much more must it be so to the Christian, who knows that the presence of the God whom he worships pervades *all space*, and his Providence *all time*. Neither is it possible for us to determine the question, whether the seventh day, which we may presume was observed by the Patriarchs, was in fact the seventh

the week, as reckoned from the beginning of the world. It is obvious, that in the course of ages, circumstances might easily occur which would disturb the reckoning; and equally so, that this question is of no practical importance. We must not indeed forget that from the very revolution of the earth on its axis, it is impossible for all men to keep their sabbath-day at the same time.

All that we can infer from God's hallowing the seventh day, and from his instituting a sabbath for men after the model of his own—all that we can gather from the nature and reason of the case, or from the example of the Lord's servants in every age, is *this*—that in the march of time, God claims every recurring *seventh day* as peculiarly his own. In that perfect wisdom with which he adjusts all the claims of human duty in even balances, he has ordained that *this proportion of our time* should be devoted, without interruption from our temporal callings, to religious purposes. In that pure benevolence with which he seeks the happiness of mankind, and even of inferior animals; he has made (as I believe) a "perpetual decree" THAT EVERY SIX DAYS OF LABOUR, shall be succeeded by a SEVENTH DAY OF REST.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE MOSAIC SABBATH.

When amidst the general corruption of mankind, God was pleased to select a single nation through whom he might preserve in the world a knowledge of his truth, he renewed that external revelation of his law, which had doubtless been bestowed on our first parents. It is probable that the Israelites, during their long continued bondage in a foreign land, had forgotten many of their most sacred traditions, and had become involved in much ignorance and darkness. The miracles therefore which preceded their departure from Egypt, and more especially that pre-eminent one wrought at the Red Sea, were very important, not only as the means of their deliverance, but as fresh proofs of the truth of their paternal religion. When thus brought, as it were, into contact with the Moral Governor of the universe, and humbled under the manifestations of his power, they were prepared to receive those verbal and written communications of his will, by which their future conduct was to be regulated.

It is a remarkable fact, that the observance of the sabbath was the first moral duty which

was then enjoined upon them. We have already found occasion to remark, that when the manna was given in double quantity on the sixth day of the week, and ceased to fall on the seventh, this institution was afresh brought to their remembrance; and it was clearly manifested to them, that every recurring seventh day was thenceforth to be dedicated to a holy rest, and to the worship of God.

Afterwards, when the moral law was delivered from Mount Sinai, in the audible voice of Jehovah himself, the keeping of the sabbath was commanded as one of its essential parts, and was introduced by the term REMEMBER. "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."[1]

Nothing can be more palpable than the distinction maintained in Scripture between the ten commandments thus delivered from Mount Sinai, and the civil and ceremonial institutions of the Mosaic code. The former were laws, as old as the world itself, applicable to all men, and essential to the maintenance of a true theology

[1] Exod. xx, 8—11.

and of a righteous life. The latter, though mixed up with much that was moral, (or derived from these laws,) were intended for the national welfare, and adapted exclusively to the peculiar religious circumstances of the Hebrews. Accordingly, the former were pronounced by Jehovah himself, during a visible and awful display of his glory; whereas the latter were communicated to the people, only through the intervention of a human lawgiver. On the same ground, while the civil part of the law of Moses was committed to the magistrate, and the ceremonial part to the priest — and each was stedfastly maintained as important for its particular purpose — it was the moral part of that law, — it was the ten commandments both in their principles and in their detail, — on which the preachers of righteousness ever delighted to dwell. These were the constant theme of the rebukes, the entreaties, and the exhortations of the prophets.

In taking this view of the subject, it seems impossible to separate the fourth commandment from those which precede and follow it. It was delivered with the same solemnity as its fellows, and was written on the table of the covenant by the same finger. It is moreover important to observe, that it fitly concludes the first table of the covenant, and as fitly introduces the second. The first table relates to the worship of the true God. It proclaims his unity, and the sanctity of his name, and forbids all idolatry. How could it be better concluded than by the law of the sabbath,

which renders the regular worship of God *practicable*, by breaking the train of our temporal pursuits, and by setting apart one day in seven for this express purpose? So also the strength of the second table, which unfolds the moral obligations of man to man, will ever be found to lie in the remembrance of the *Creator* of the universe; because on his will alone are these obligations founded. Now the sabbath was the appointed means of perpetually reminding man, that he is himself a creature, and that God is his Creator and sovereign. It was a current saying among the Talmudists, "He that denies the sabbath is like to him who denies the whole law." Rabbi Levi, of Barcelona, says that the object of the sabbath of the Israelites was, "that having no other business, they might fasten on their minds that the world had a beginning, which is a thread which draws after it all the foundations of the law."[2] Accordingly we find that while most of the *ceremonial* law was instituted by Moses *prospectively*, with a view of its being put into practice after the Israelites had settled in the land of Canaan, the sabbath was strictly observed, even during their journey in the wilderness.[3]

There is another respect in which the sabbath was considered, by the ancient Jewish doctors, to be of high practical importance. Although it has been questioned whether, in the time of Moses, the Israelites had any

[2] See *Patrick* on Exod. xx, 9—12; and Numb. xv, 35.
[3] Exod. xvi. Numb. xv, 32.

distinct views of the doctrine of *immortality*, yet there can be no doubt, that, as they advanced in religious knowledge, they were taught to look forward to a future state, in which the righteous should be rewarded according to their works. Now the sabbath was regarded as giving weight to the whole law of God, by *typically reminding the people of their eternal rest*. "The sabbath," say the Rabbins, "was given to be a type of a future eternity."[4] "The precept concerning the sabbath," says Abarbanel, "not only designates that fundamental article of the creation of the world, but points to a spiritual world, wherein will be a true rest and a substantial inheritance. There shall be our true cessation from corporeal cares and labours."[5]

As the law of the sabbath was inseparably connected with the remainder of the decalogue, so, like the other moral laws of God, it formed a leading subject of prophetic exhortation. Isaiah appears to place "keeping the sabbath" and "keeping judgment" on the same level;[6] and soon afterwards, he mentions the former in immediate connexion with "taking hold" of God's "covenant."[7] Again, through the same prophet, JEHOVAH says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing

4 Vid. *Buxtorf florilog. Heb.* 299. 5 On Exod. xxxi. 13.
6 Isaiah lvi. 2. 7 Isaiah lvi. 6.

thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking (thine own) words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."[8] With this beautiful passage may be compared the words of Jeremiah. "And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow the sabbath-day, to do no work therein, then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever."[9]

The principle advocated in these passages is plainly this—that the seventh day was claimed by Jehovah as peculiarly his own—that its hours were to be devoted to rest and religion—and that it might not be diverted from its right use, for the sake either of amusement or of business. The carrying of burdens through the gates of Jerusalem, was a circumstance connected with the regular course of *trade*, and persons who continued this practice during the sabbath-day, set the law of God at defiance, by applying that period of time which he had set apart for Himself, to the pursuit of temporal gain. They at once renounced

[8] Isaiah lviii. 13, 14. [9] Jer. xvii. 24, 25.

their faith in Jehovah, and their obedience to his revealed will.

This part of the subject is illustrated by a passage in the history of Nehemiah, who was zealous for the whole law of God, and especially for the sabbatical institution.

"In these days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will

lay hands upon you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath."[1]

We ought not to pass over this remarkable passage without observing that Nehemiah, the chief magistrate of the people, acted on this occasion, not merely as a Jew, but in the more comprehensive character of a servant of God. He was endeavouring to maintain a divine law long anterior in date to the Mosaic code, and essential to the *civil* as well as religious welfare of mankind.

But the duties of the sabbath were not merely negative. The Israelites were required, on that day especially, to *delight themselves* in the Lord. It was because of its being dedicated to the salutary and joyful purpose of worship, that they were to "call" that sacred day "a delight" and "honourable." That the Jews, after their return from captivity, were accustomed to assemble in their synagogues on a sabbath day, for the purpose of public worship, is a fact familiar to every reader of the New Testament. But, even from the first promulgation of their law, the duty of congregational worship was understood to be inseparably connected with the sabbath. Like the high days of their great festivals, each recurring seventh day was to be "a holy convocation." The people were to meet in a large assembly, not surely as some persons have imagined, for the mere purpose of feasting, but for the holier one of prayer and praise and listening to the words of the law. "Speak unto the children

[1] Neh. xiii, 15—21.

of Israel," said the Lord to Moses.... "concerning the feasts of the Lord which ye shall proclaim to be *holy convocations*, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh is a sabbath of rest— a *holy convocation*."[1] That on these solemn occasions the law was publicly read appears probable from the testimony of James, (the brother of our Lord,) who, in addressing the church at Jerusalem, said, "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day."[2] The phrase rendered "of old time" signifies "FROM THE ANCIENT GENERATIONS,"[3] and denotes the great antiquity of the practice in question. Accordingly Josephus declares that Moses commanded the people "to remit their other employments every seventh day, and *to gather together for the purpose of hearing the law read and of accurately learning it*."[4] A similar assertion is made by Philo.[5] In the second book of Kings we read of the "*covert for the sabbath* which they had built in the house." This covert is generally supposed to have been a splendid awning, erected in connection with the temple, under which the king sat during the time of congregational worship.[6]

2 Acts xv, 21.

1 Lev. xxiii, 3.

3 ἀπὸ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων.

4 ἑκάστης ἑβδομάδος τῶν ἄλλων ἔργων ἀφιμένους, ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν τοῦ νόμου ἐκέλευσε συλλεγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν. *Contra Apion.* ii, 17.

5 *De Vita Mosis*, lib. iii. *Jewish Ant.* II, 130.

6 Chap. xvi, 18. vid. *Gill in loc.*

It appears then that the ancient Israelites were fully aware that the religious observance of every seventh day formed a part of that higher class of their duties, which was distinguished, in the very nature of things, from every thing merely civil or ceremonial. The sabbath was ordained for their spiritual welfare; it was enforced by the most awful sanctions; it was inscribed on the tables of their covenant; it was presented to them as an essential part of the moral law of God.

While this point is so plain that it can scarcely fail to be conceded by the impartial examiner of scripture, we ought not to forget that the sabbath, under the Mosaic economy, served certain purposes, and was marked by certain characteristics, *which had no relation except to that economy*. This article of the decalogue was applied to the Israelites on a national, as well as on a more general principle, and in *such a form or manner* as suited the peculiar circumstances under which they were placed.

1. The Mosaic sabbath was intended for a sign by which the Israelites might be distinguished from all the idolatrous nations which surrounded them. It was a visible and intelligible badge of their loyalty to the King of kings,—a public testimony, borne amidst all the heathen, to the authority of Jehovah. "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep," said the Lord by Moses, "for it is *a sign* between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord

that doth SANCTIFY you . . . . . W[illegible] the children of Israel shall keep the [illegible] to observe the sabbath throughout th[eir] [illegible]rations for a perpetual covenant. It [is a sign] between me and the children of [Israel] for ever."[7] So again in the book of [Ezekiel] Jehovah says, "And I gave them my [statutes] and shewed them my judgments. [Moreover] also, I gave them my sabbaths to [be a sign] between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that SANCTIFY them."[8]

2. As the sabbath was a means of distinguishing the Israelites as the worshippers of the true God, so it was intended to remind them of the *national* redemption which Jehovah had wrought for them. As the creation of the world was the *first*, so the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, was the *second* event of which it was the appointed memorial. In the repetition made by Moses of the ten commandments, this latter event is alone alluded to in connection with the sabbath, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm. THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day."[9]

3. When JEHOVAH enjoined on the Israelites in the wilderness the keeping of the sabbath, he appointed a *particular day* for the purpose, and distinguished it from other

[7] Exod. xxxi, 12—17. [8] Ezek. xx, 11, 12.
[9] Deut. v, 15.

days, by a cessation of the manna.[1] Since this event took place within a few weeks of the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and since *that* was the *national* day which the sabbath was intended to commemorate, we may reasonably conclude with Patrick, Mede,[2] and other learned writers, that the day of the week thus selected for the sabbath, was the day of the passage of the Red Sea.

Whether this day corresponded with that of the patriarchal sabbath, is a question involved in great doubt. On the one hand, it is remarked that the seventh day of the Hebrew week, was also the seventh—the Saturni sacra dies—of the Greek and Roman week, at the Christian era—a circumstance from which it may be inferred that the sabbath of the Jews agreed, as to its day, with that of the Patriarchs. On the other hand, it is argued, that there might not be the same correspondence between the Hebrew and Heathen weeks in more ancient times; and the history of the Israelites in the wilderness is considered to contain an internal evidence that a *new day* was appointed for their sabbath. From Exodus xvi, 1, it appears that the seventh day preceding that on which the manna ceased to fall, was occupied, not by a holy rest, but by a wearisome journey in the wilderness of Sin. Now although the Israelites might have forgotten the sabbatical institution,

1 Exod. xvi, 23.

2 See *Patrick* Exod. xvi. *Mede's Works*, book I. disc. xv.

yet as their journeys were under the direct command of JEHOVAH, it is presumed that a day thus spent could not have been that of the original sabbath.

Whatever decision, however, may be formed on this question, it is sufficiently clear that the selection of this particular day for the sabbath of the Israelites, belonged to their *national* history, and was in itself a *non-essential* circumstance.

4. As the Israelitish sabbath-day was the seventh of the week, and as the Hebrews reckoned their days from evening to evening,[3] it followed that their sabbath began on what we should call *the evening of the sixth day*, and continued until the same hour on the day following. According to the Rabbins, it commenced and terminated with the appearance of the stars.

One peculiarity which arose out of this circumstance was, that the *afternoon* of the sixth day was occupied by the duties of preparation. The sabbath was a joyful feast, and a greater supply of food was required on that day than on any other; but since the law forbad the cooking of victuals on the day itself, the last few hours of the preceding one were allotted to this object. Although no mention is made in the Mosaic law of *the preparation*, the provisions of that law rendered it needful, and the practice of thus observing the sixth day afternoon, of which there is a plain notice

[3] See Levit. xxiii. 32.

in the Gospels,[4] was probably of very ancient date.

5. The sabbath of the Hebrews was distinguished by the performance, in the temple, of a double ceremonial: "And on the sabbath-day (thou shalt offer) two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof. This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, *beside* the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."[5] This double service may be regarded as a figurative indication that the sabbath-day has a double claim upon us for the duties of worship. The figure is Jewish; but the lesson derived from it is applicable to the Christian.

Our Saviour when conversing with the Jews, spoke of the priests being permitted by the law to *profane* the sabbath (or break the rest of it) in the temple.[6] His allusion was probably to these double sacrifices, which entailed considerable labour on the priests and Levites; especially the slaying, flaying, and cutting in pieces, of the victim, the arrangement of the wood, and the lighting of a fire. The preparation and setting in order of the *shew-bread*, was another of the sacerdotal offices which was performed every sabbath-day.[7] On that day, also, the courses of the priests and Levites underwent their weekly change.[8] The

4 Matt. xxvii, 62. Mark xv, 42, &c.
5 Num. xxviii, 9, 10. 6 Matt. xii, 5.
7 Levit. xxiv, 8. 1 Chron. ix, 32.
8 Vid. *Maimonides. in Gill on Luke* i, 6.

obvious ground of these provisions was, that the work performed in the temple coincided with the main purpose of the sabbath—that of the honour and worship of God—and, therefore, although a literal exception to the fourth commandment, involved no breach of its intention and spirit.

6. Under the Mosaic economy the sabbatical principle took a wider range than appears to have been enjoined or authorized by the original law. Not only was every seventh day to be a day of rest, but during the whole of every seventh year (reckoned, as is supposed, from the month Tizri, or September) the Israelites were to cease from agricultural labour. They and their land were to keep holy day; and the natural productions of their fields were to be the portion only of the poor. At the same period, every debt was to be cancelled, and every Hebrew slave restored to freedom; and the whole population was to unite in praising and blessing God. The observance of the sabbatical year was inseparably connected with the peculiar dispensation under which the Israelites lived. That dispensation was one of miracles. It was also one of temporal rewards and punishments. By a miracle of regular recurrence, every sixth year was to be made doubly fruitful; and on condition of obedience to this command, the Israelites were to be blessed with great temporal prosperity. This was a point, however, respecting which their faith failed them, and, during a long period of their history, they utterly neglected

their sabbatical year. The consequence was, that they were punished with banishment into the land of their enemies, and their own land was left to "enjoy her sabbaths" in a state of ruin and desolation.[1]

Another extension of the sabbatical principle under the law of Moses, was the appointment of one day or more of holy rest during each of their great festivals, the Passover, and the feasts of weeks, trumpets, and tabernacles. On these high days, there was held, as well as on the usual sabbath, "a holy convocation," and no *servile work* was permitted to be done in them. This prohibition did not exclude the preparation of food. But on the great day of atonement—the tenth of the seventh month—no work *at all* was allowed, and the sabbath was kept *fully*.[2] It was probably in allusion to these well known holy days, that the Jewish festivals were sometimes designated by the general name of "*sabbaths*."

7. Lastly, the sabbath-day, under the law of Moses, was required to be observed with a *strictness*, and the breach of it was punished with a *severity*, which may fairly be regarded as appertaining solely to the dispensation then in force. The commandment, "In it thou shalt not do any work," &c., as interpreted by the Law, was far more rigid and comprehensive than it is possible for us to regard it as it is interpreted by the Gospel. Although

[1] See Levit. xxvi. 34, 35, 43. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.
[2] Levit. xxiii. 31.

our Saviour, the Lord of the sabbath, made a clear exception in favour of works of mercy and necessity, it may be questioned whether such an exception (unless within narrow limits) was either contemplated by Moses, or maintained by his followers.

The strictness of the institution among the ancient Hebrews, is marked by some particular injunctions contained in the Pentateuch. One of these accompanied the earliest recognition of the sabbath, after the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. "Abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the sabbath-day."[3] In their interpretation of this precept, the Rabbins made allowance for the distance which an Israelite would be required to pass over, in walking from the extremity of the camp to the "tabernacle of the congregation;" but they determined, that no Jew might move from his house on the sabbath-day, more than the space which they conceived to have been necessary for this purpose. This they presumed to be *two thousand cubits*—a space which was afterwards familiarly known by the name of *a sabbath day's journey*.[4] In the Chaldee Targum on Ruth, we read, "Naomi said unto Ruth, we are commanded to keep the sabbath, and good days, and not to go above two thousand cubits."[5] When our Saviour commanded his disciples to pray that their

[3] Exod. xvi. 29. [4] Acts i. 12.
[5] Targ. Ruth i. 16.

flight from Jerusalem might not be on the sabbath-day;[6] he appears to have glanced at the probability, that a rigorous application of the sabbatical law, might prevent their fleeing on that day more than a single mile, even for the purpose of escaping from their enemies.[7]

Another injunction was, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your generations on the seventh day."[8] The principal meaning of this command might probably be, that no food should be dressed on the sabbath: yet the Law gave no authority for the distinction which was afterwards made among the Jews, that a fire might be lighted on the sabbath, for the purpose of warmth, though not for that of cooking.[9]

A striking instance is recorded in the Mosaic history, of the severity with which a breach of this part of the sabbatical law was punished. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that *gathered sticks* upon the sabbath-day. And they that found him gathering sticks, brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him: And the LORD said unto Moses, the man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation

6 Matt. xxiv, 20.
8 Exod. xxxv, 3.
7 Vide *Gill in loc.*
9 Vide *Gill in loc.*

brought him without the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses."[1] The doubt evinced on this occasion by Moses and Aaron, is supposed to have had relation only to the *mode* of this transgressor's death; for the law which enacted capital punishment for the crime of sabbath-breaking, had already been pronounced with reiterated solemnity: "Ye shall keep the sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall *surely be put to death*: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people."[2] "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day, there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall *be put to death*."[3]

It appears to have been a principle maintained under the Mosaic dispensation, that every breach of the law, being a sin against God, deserved the punishment of death. Venial and ceremonial transgressions were purged by sacrifice, and the appointed victim bled in the room of the offender. But crimes of a deeper dye, and especially those which involved deliberate rebellion against God, were actually punished with death.[4] The man who gathered sticks on the sabbath, appears to have been regarded as a "presumptuous" offender, who, by a significant act *denied the authority of*

1 Numb. xv, 32—36. 2 Exod. xxxi, 14.
3 Exod. xxxv, 2. 4 Numb. xv, 30.

his Creator. He was accordingly punished with the same death as was inflicted on blasphemers against JEHOVAH.[5]

Now, while the severity thus exercised in the punishment of a deliberate breach of the sabbath, affords a fresh proof of the moral and spiritual nature of that institution, every one must perceive, that this severity itself forms no part of God's unchanging law, but belonged exclusively to the Mosaic dispensation. It appertained to the peculiar character of the "letter" which "killeth."[6]

On a general review of this branch of our subject, the reader will observe—1. That the sabbath, after having been enjoined on the Israelites in the wilderness, was again brought to their *remembrance*, in the fourth commandment, as an essential article of their moral law—that it was inseparably connected both with the first and with the second table of their covenant—that it gave the whole law a peculiar sanction, by reminding them of eternity to come—that like the rest of the ten commandments, and even above the rest, it was the subject of the emphatic and fervid ministry of their prophets—and lastly, that it was broadly marked by a cessation from temporal concerns, and by the delightful practice of congregational worship.

2. That this institution nevertheless served *peculiar* purposes, and was distinguished by

[5] Levit. xxiv, 16. [6] 2 Cor. iii, 6.

peculiar marks, under the Mosaic economy. It was a sign to separate the Israelites from all other nations. It was a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt. It was fixed, for this particular reason, on the seventh day of the week. It commenced and terminated with the evening hour, and was preceded by a stated period of preparation. It was distinguished by a double ceremonial of sacrifice. Its principle was extended to every seventh year, and to all the Jewish festivals. Lastly, it was required to be observed with a *legal* strictness, and the breach of it was punished with a *legal* severity.

I conceive that the distinction between these two branches of the Mosaic sabbatical code, is clear and palpable. The former branch contains a law which has been binding on man in all ages, and under the influence of the gospel, must flourish with fresh vigour. The latter branch was in its nature temporary, and under the same influence, has withered away for ever.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE JEWISH SABBATH AT THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

The law of God is declared by the apostle Paul to be "spiritual;"[1] by which term we may understand, that it is intended to regulate not the outward conduct only, but the condition of the heart and the motives for action. The word "spiritual," in this point of view, applies to the fourth with the same propriety as to the other nine commandments. The law of the sabbath in its true intention, demands not merely the external practices of ceasing from labour, and of assembling for public worship, but a disentanglement of the *mind* from temporal objects, a devotion of the soul to God, and a cordial pursuit of heavenly and eternal things. Thus alone can we "keep" the sabbath "holy;"[2] and thus alone can we ourselves be "*sanctified*"[3] in the use of it. Hence it follows that the fourth commandment might at once be rigidly observed as to its letter, and grievously infringed as

[1] Rom. vii, 14. [2] Exod. xx, 8.
[3] Exod. xxxi, 13.

to its spirit: and this appears to have been the case among the Jews at the Christian era.

A remarkable revolution had taken place in the character of that people since their return from captivity in Babylon. Idolatry was no longer their temptation, but they prided themselves in the superiority of their religion to that of other nations. The worship of one God was their *boast*, although their hearts were far from him; and while they were exact in maintaining the outward framework of that worship, they became in their conduct remarkably degenerate and corrupt. While vice abounded superstition increased, and to the law of God were added a multitude of unauthorised traditions. The scribes and Pharisees especially, gave tithes of mint and anise and cummin, while they omitted "the weightier matters of the law, mercy, judgment, and faith."[4] They were like whited sepulchres, fair on the outside, but within "full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness."[5]

It was easy for such persons, and it very well served their purpose, to keep the sabbath with great outward strictness; and from various passages in the New Testament it may be inferred, that there was no part of the Mosaic code on which it was more their custom to insist. Neither was there any which had become more mixed up with their own traditions.

From the history of the Maccabees it appears, that long before the coming of Christ,

[4] Matt. xxiii, 23. [5] Matt. xxiii, 27.

the sabbath was observed with a superstitious severity. When Antiochus Epiphanes (B. C. 168) oppressed and defiled Jerusalem, a thousand Jews who refused to comply with his wicked designs, fled from the city into the wilderness, and there they suffered themselves to be cut to pieces without the slightest resistance, solely because their enemies attacked them on the sabbath-day.[6] After this event, Mattathias and his followers determined that self-defence on the sabbath-day should be considered lawful—a principle which was acted on with success by Judas Maccabæus. Nevertheless, since no efforts even to resist an enemy were allowed on that day, except in case of an actual attack, nothing might be done on the sabbath to impede the enemy's works. When Pompey, the Roman general, besieged Jerusalem, he availed himself of this superstition, and took care to occupy the sabbath-day, not by any attack on the Jews, but solely in the erection of his works.[7] Having, in consequence, completed these without interruption, he afterwards had little difficulty in storming the sacred city.

The following is a brief account of the manner in which the early Jews observed the sabbath.

The *preparation*, which began on the sixth day of the week, after the evening sacrifice (that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon),

[6] 1 Maccabees ii. 34—38.

[7] *Josephus Antiq.* Lib. XIV. c. iv. sec. 2—4.

was ushered in by two soundings of horns or trumpets: the one to distinguish the common day from the holy day which was now approaching; and the other to give notice to the people that their usual employments were to cease. Tailors and shoemakers, indeed, were allowed to pursue their callings during half the hours of the preparation, and so also were the scribes; the two former that they might dress the bodies, and the last that they might the better instruct the minds, of their brethren, on the sabbath. With this exception all work was now suspended but that of *preparation*, which consisted partly in cleaning their houses and washing their persons, that they might meet the sabbath with decency, and partly in preparing the excellent meals on which they were to regale during the sacred day. In these pious labours (as they were esteemed) all hands were employed, and it became the joint task of master and servant, mistress and handmaid, parent and child, to sweep the floors, cleave the wood, light the fires, chop the herbs, and prepare the viands. During the same afternoon, no journey might be undertaken which would not terminate before sunset; and all proceedings affecting life and death were suspended in the courts of justice.[8]

About six o'clock in the evening, when the sun was near setting, the sabbath commenced,

8 By a decree of Augustus, the Roman emperor, the Jews were exempt from summons into any court of justice from three o'clock on the sixth day afternoon, until the sabbath was over. *Lewis Origines Heb.* vol. ii. p. 577.

and the trumpets were blown from that covered place by the temple, where the king sat in the congregations.[2] This was the signal for lighting the sabbatical lamps in their houses —an office which devolved on the women of every family, who were also required to keep the lamps burning during the whole sabbath. The practice of lighting and keeping alive the sabbatical lamps was enjoined upon *all* the Jews; on the poor who were obliged to beg for oil, as well as on the rich who possessed it in abundance: and no wonder; for this, according to their notions, was the proper method of fulfilling the precept, "Thou shalt call the sabbath a *delight, and honourable.*"[1]

On a similar principle they considered that they fulfilled the command to "*hallow* the sabbath day," by pronouncing at their first sabbatical meal (eaten at the commencement of the sabbath) a form of words, which they called *kiddush, or sanctification.* They always partook of three meals on the sabbath, and thought themselves obliged to do so in honour of the day. Even the poor who lived upon alms were bound to eat three times, and the rich feasted deliciously. All were dressed in the best clothes which they could command, and these were called "*sabbatical garments.*"

The first duty of the morning was to attend on public prayer in the synagogues; after which service they ate their second meal. When this meal was concluded, they frequently

[2] 2 Kings xvi. 18. [1] Isaiah lviii. 13.

occupied themselves with going to hear a discourse on divinity from some one of their scribes or doctors. In the afternoon the festive board was again spread, and they continued eating and drinking until three stars of considerable magnitude became visible in the firmament. This was the established sign of the departure of the sabbath; spices were then prepared in each family, for the refreshment of those who might faint for sorrow at the termination of so joyful a day; and over these spices the master of every house pronounced what they called *habdalah*, that is, *the blessing of separation*. Thus the ceremonies of the day were concluded.[2]

We have already remarked that in the temple, a double service of sacrifice was required on the sabbath. This service was accompanied, morning and evening, by three blasts of the trumpet beyond what was usual on other days; and in the morning the priests sung the song of Moses in Deuteronomy[3]—a sixth part every week; in the evening, the song of Moses in Exodus.[4]

With respect to the command which forbad all manner of work on the sabbath-day, the Jews, under the influence of their traditions, were exceedingly punctilious in the observance of it; and some of the decrees of the rabbinical doctors in reference to this subject are frivolous in the extreme. They advanced as many as thirty-nine negative precepts

2 See *Lewis Origines Hebr*, book iv. ch. 16.
3 Deut. xxxii. 4 Exod. xv.

respecting things which might not be done on the sabbath, and these precepts severally branched out into various minor details. For example, a man might not thresh on the sabbath; neither might he walk on the grass, so as to bruise it, which was a kind of threshing. Again, a man might not hunt on the sabbath; neither might he catch a flea while it hops about, which is a kind of hunting.[5]

Our Saviour asked the Jews which of them would not on the sabbath day lead his ox or his ass to the watering, or pull out his sheep from a pit into which it might have fallen?[6] From these questions we may conclude that whatever the Jews might profess, they did not, in practice, hesitate to perform works of necessity on the sabbath, for the sake of their own advantage. The Rabbins, however, have instituted some curious distinctions in reference to these points. According to them, a man might fill a trough with water on the sabbath, that his beasts might *come* and *drink*, but he might not convey it to the place where the animals were standing.[7] So also, if a beast fell into a ditch or pool of water on the sabbath, a man might feed it *there*, in order to save its life; and if it was so placed as not to be able to feed, he might put bolsters under it, that if it could come out, it might do so of its own accord; but he might not pull it out *with*

5 See *Jennings' Jewish Antiq.* b. iii. c. iii. vol. 2, p. 137.
6 Luke xiii. 15. Matt. xii. 11.
7 *T. Bab. Erubin*, fol. 202. *Gill on Luke* xiii.

his hand.[8] Another rabbinical precept was aimed against all attempts on the sabbath, to cure *chronic* complaints. A man afflicted with a diseased eye might plaister it on the sabbath, for the sake of ease and pleasure, but not for the purpose of healing![9]

Such was the Jewish sabbath, and such the superstitions with which it was encumbered. There is reason to believe that the religious opinions of the Jews underwent scarcely any change during several centuries after the Christian era. Although, therefore, a few of these superstitions probably arose among the Rabbins of later times, the general account now given may be considered as applying to the period when Jesus Christ was upon earth. The substance of the statement is indeed amply confirmed by the evidence of the evangelists themselves. In the midst of a deep national corruption, and while true piety and virtue were at a low ebb, the forms of religion were multiplied, and were observed with a studious exactness. Such a scene ought not to be contemplated without instruction. It may remind us of the ever watchful craft of our soul's adversary, who leaves no stone unturned to bring us under his power. Behold the Israelites, during one period of their history, neglecting the peculiarities of their ritual worship, despising their sabbath, and plunging into idolatry! Behold them, at another period, strict

8 *Maimonides Hilchot Sab.* c. 25. sec. 26. *Lightfoot and Gill on* Matt. xii.

9 *Pirke Tanchai Sab.* art. 67. *Gill on* John ix. 16.

the performance of all their ceremonies, *caricaturing* their sabbath by the superstitious observance of it, boasting of their faith in the unity of God, yet destitute of the life of religion, and sunk in immorality!

We have now to enter upon a question of vital importance to our subject. What were the principles in relation to the sabbath, which JESUS CHRIST maintained in his own conduct and doctrine?

In pursuing this enquiry, we must of course keep in view the circumstances which have now been detailed, and especially the *condition of the Jewish mind* with regard to this institution, at the time when our Saviour was on earth. We must not expect to find him insisting on an external duty, which the people amongst whom he lived were already in the habit of punctiliously observing. We might rather presume that he would be found rebuking them for their dependance on the mere forms of religion—directing their attention to its substance—and declaring, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

Such, we know, was the fact. But while our blessed Lord discountenanced all superstitious notions respecting the sabbath, and even relaxed that legal strictness which hung about the fourth commandment under the Mosaic dispensation, he maintained the substance of that commandment in all its integrity.

Every one who is familiar with the ministry of JESUS as recorded by the evangelists, must

be aware how carefully he guarded the *whole* moral law of God. There can be no question that he was speaking of *this* law, contained as it was in the ten commandments, and inscribed on the tables of the covenant, when he said, "Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle* shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."[1] Again, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."[2]

It seems impossible to avoid concluding from these passages that the whole moral code, as it had been revealed to the Israelites, was to remain in unimpaired authority to the end of time; nor does there appear to be any good reason why the principle here laid down by our Saviour, should not apply to the fourth as well as to the other nine commandments. When the ruler asked him "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" our Lord referred him to "the commandments," and although he then spoke of the *second table* only, he virtually sanctioned them all.[3] This also was the case when the scribe came to him and enquired "Which is the first commandment of all?"[4] for who can doubt that our Lord

[1] Matt. v. 18, 19. [2] Luke xvi. 17.
[3] Luke xviii. 20. *Comp.* Matt. xix. 16, Mark x. 17.
[4] Mark xii. 28.

intended to comprehend the whole of the two tables of the covenant, when he stated the great commandments of love to God, and love to our neighbour? The neglect of the sabbath would break the first of these commandments, just as theft or adultery would break the second; and when the scribe distinguished these moral duties from all things merely ceremonial —from "all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices"—Jesus perceived that "he answered discreetly,"[5] and said "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."[6]

As our blessed Lord in his doctrine maintained the integrity of the moral law, so in his life and conversation, he fulfilled "all righteousness." In order to this end, he submitted even to the ceremonial ordinances which were then in force,[7] and who will dare to question his having kept the whole of the ten commandments, according to their true meaning and spirit, absolutely *inviolate*? Of his fulfilment of the chief duty of the sabbath, we have abundant evidence; for various occasions are mentioned by the evangelists, on which he attended the worship of God in the synagogues: and from a statement made by Luke, we learn that this was his *regular habit*. "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought

[5] νουνεχῶς.

[6] That the apostles after the example of their Master maintained the authority of the moral law as contained in the ten commandments, is evident from Rom. xiii, 9. Eph. vi, 2. Gal. v, 14. James ii, 10, &c.

[7] Matt. iii. 15.

up, and AS HIS CUSTOM WAS he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."[8] Neither did our Saviour refuse to participate in those sabbatical meals which were then customary among the Jews—the sabbath being, by divine authority, one of their feasts. He was eating bread in the Pharisee's house, on the sabbath day, when he healed the man who was afflicted with the dropsy.[9]

Many of his most remarkable miracles were performed on the sabbath—the healing of Peter's wife's mother;[1] the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda;[2] the gift of sight to one born blind;[3] the restoration of the withered hand;[4] and lastly, the instantaneous recovery of the woman who had been bowed together with infirmity for eighteen years.[5] In selecting the sabbath and its solemn occasions of worship for these acts, our Saviour may well be deemed to have had a double object in view—first, to refute the idle notion of the Jews that it was not lawful to heal the sick on the sabbath day,[6] and to establish the principle, that *to do good* is always lawful: secondly, to

8 Luke iv, 16. *comp.* ver. 31; Mark vi, 2, &c.
9 Luke xiv, 1—6.
1 Luke iv, 38—41.
2 John v.
3 John ix.
4 Matt. xii, 13.
5 Luke xiii, 10—13.

6 No Christian will, I presume, question the lawfulness of healing the sick on the sabbath day. Yet the *medical practitioner* who pursues his calling during the whole of that day, and habitually neglects the duty of divine worship, must surely be regarded as a breaker of the sabbath. He will find nothing to justify his conduct in the example or in the precepts of the Saviour of men.

celebrate the day and do it honour, by these glorious exertions of his benevolence and power.

All these histories are full of interest and instruction, but in order to obtain a correct view of our Saviour's deportment and doctrine on such occasions, it may suffice to select two of them for more detailed observation. The man who lay at the pool of Bethesda amidst a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, and withered, had been afflicted with an infirmity for thirty and eight years.—His cure was public and immediate. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk; and immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, he that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk."[7]

Between that carrying of burdens which belonged to the course of trade, and which was so severely reprobated by the prophets as a breach of the sabbath, and the bearing away of the mattress on which this poor man was lying, and which might otherwise have been lost to him, the distinction is too obvious to need discussion.[8] Still, the deed was a breach of

[7] John v, 5—11.

[8] We are informed by modern travellers, that the beds used in the East, are light and portable, often consisting of a mattress laid on the floor, with a single covering. These, during the day, are rolled up, and placed in a cupboard. The poor mendicant probably would find his

the law of Moses, according to its *literal exactness*, and was, as well as the act of healing a chronic disease, directly opposed to the notions then prevalent among the Jews. "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day."[9] The answer of Jesus is sublime indeed. He condescends not to rebut the charge that he had broken the sabbath—a charge depending on a rigorous interpretation of the letter of the law, but cuts the whole matter short by an expressive allusion to his own divinity. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[1]—As God the Father, who rested on the seventh day after the original creation, is perpetually at work in the maintenance and reproduction of all things natural, and in conducting the scheme of Providence, so the Son also in the plenitude of his power and goodness, is ever *acting* for the benefit of mankind, and for the healing and protection of his believing children. No wonder that "the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that, God was his Father, *making himself equal with God*."[2]

wretched pallet a very easy load. See *Harmer's Observ.* vol. ii, p. 66. It is evident however, that notwithstanding this distinction, the Jews, on this occasion, considered the sabbath to be broken. Accordingly, in the Mishnah we read, "he that rolls up a bed of the braziers or tinkers on the sabbath day, is bound in a sin offering." *Sabbat.* cap. 10, sec. 5. *Gill in loc.*

9 John v, 16. 1 John v, 17.

2 John v, 18.

Still greater light however is thrown on this subject, by the circumstances of another sabbath-day in our Lord's history. He and his disciples were passing through a corn field, and his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn, to rub them in their hands, and to eat. The Pharisees saw it and said, "Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-day." According to their notions, to eat on that day was of course lawful, but to pluck the ears of corn and to rub them was unlawful; nor was their objection without some foundation in the law of Moses, which is universally understood to have forbidden the preparation of food on the sabbath.[3] On this occasion as on the former, our Lord made an appeal to his own divine authority. "Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred and they that were with him, how he entered into the house of God and did eat the shew bread which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are blameless. But I say unto you that in this place is *One greater than the temple*. But if ye had known what this

3 See Exod. xxxv, 3. The distinction between those holy days in which no "*servile* work might be done," and the weekly sabbaths and great day of atonement, in which a man might do "*no manner of work*," was chiefly, that in the former, food might be prepared; in the latter, *it might not*.

meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless; for the son of man is *Lord even of the sabbath day*."[4]

The disciples, when they plucked and rubbed the ears of corn, were as guiltless in the sight of God, as David was when he ate the shew bread with his companions, and as the priests were, who wrought in the temple during the sabbath-day. David was excused for a breach of the letter of the law by the necessity of his case, and by the peculiar providence which guided and protected him.[5] The priests were justified by the religious nature of their calling, as well as by the plain directions of the law itself. On behalf of the disciples it might have been pleaded, that the manner in which they prepared their food, could scarcely be said to involve "any work;" but it sufficed for them, that they acted with the sanction of their Master, who, in his divine nature was "greater than the temple"—far exalted above the whole system of Jewish worship—and LORD even of the SABBATH-DAY.

In Him there dwelt an authority, which sufficed not merely for the lenient and mer-

[4] Matt. xii, 1—8.

[5] At first sight it appears remarkable that David's *eating the shew bread*, should be mentioned in reference to a question respecting the *sabbath*. On examination, however, it appears, that the transaction took place on the sabbath day: for the loaves which Ahimilech gave to David, were the old ones, which he was then exchanging for bread newly made. Now this change took place on the sabbath.—See 1 Samuel xxi, 6. *Comp.* Levit. xxiv, 8.

ciful interpretation of the sabbatical law, or for the relaxing of its literal rigour, but even should he see meet, for its total abolition.

But while Jesus demanded "mercy and not sacrifice," he maintained the law of God in all its spiritual intent—in all its genuine vigour. There is nothing in this transaction, or in any similar one recorded in the New Testament, which weakens the fourth commandment as reasonably interpreted, and as forming a constituent part of the "perfect law of liberty."[6] This observation is confirmed by the remainder of the narrative. "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue; and behold there was a man which had his hand withered; and they asked him saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, what man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore *it is lawful* to do well on the sabbath-days. Then said he to the man, stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like the other."[7] Here it is evident that while our Lord makes an allowance for works of *necessity*, and by his glorious example invites to works of *mercy*, on the sabbath day; he places both on the sim-

[6] James i, 25. [7] Matt. xii, 9—13.

ple ground of their *lawfulness*, and thus maintains *the law* inviolate.

It appears then—First, that at the time when our Saviour was on earth, the Jews were no longer prone to the neglect of any outward rite, but were strong in the forms of religion, though not in its power.

Secondly, that in this spirit they punctiliously observed the sabbath, with a variety of curious ceremonies, and under many superstitious notions.

Thirdly, that while our Saviour rebuked their formality, contradicted their superstitions, and even relaxed the literal rigour of their law, he maintained that law in its substance and spirit: by his support of the ten commandments in general—by his customary attendance of the synagogue worship—and by a frequently implied acknowledgment of the obligation of the sabbath, within its true scope.

The evangelist Mark, has recorded another of our Lord's sayings, a brief view of which may fitly conclude the discussion of this branch of our subject. "THE SABBATH," said Jesus, "WAS MADE FOR MAN, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH."[8]

When the Jews gave their chief attention to the literal and outward fulfilment of the sabbatical law—when they added to that law very numerous traditions of their own—when they carried their superstitions on the subject

[8] Mark ii, 27.

into frivolous and childish absurdities—when they strained at the "gnat" in this matter, while in others they were swallowing the "camel" —they acted as if *man was made for the sabbath*. But their error was radical; they mistook the very nature and principle of the divine commandments. The sabbath, like every other part of the moral law of God, was made for *man*—not for the Jew alone, but *for our species*. It is a gift bestowed upon us, in perfect wisdom and pure benevolence, for the refreshment of our bodies, and for the improvement of our souls—for enabling us to commune at leisure with our God and Father—for promoting our piety, our virtue, and our happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Sufficient proof, I trust, has now been adduced, that a weekly sabbath was ordained from the beginning of the world for the welfare of mankind—that among the ancient Israelites, this general law was carefully maintained, with the addition of some peculiar provisions—and that although our Saviour rebuked the folly of Jewish superstition, in relation to the sabbath, and even relaxed the strictness of the Mosaic precept, he gave his clear sanction to the institution itself.

How then are we to observe the sabbath under the Christian dispensation? Not as a rite, accompanied with Jewish ceremonies, and guarded with a legal severity, but in its original simplicity, and in Christian liberty,—in such a manner as will best remind us of the blessings bestowed on man, through the coming of our Redeemer.

Within half a century of the death of Christ, the national polity of the Jews was brought to its termination. Their city and temple were destroyed, their priesthood abrogated, and the people, though destined in all ages to be mark-

ed and separate, were scattered among Gentile nations, over the face of the earth. This therefore was the end of their *civil law*. With respect to their *ceremonial law*, all Christians allow that the whole of it was virtually abolished, when the great Antitype had offered up himself on the cross, as an atonement for the sins of the world. Now the *law of the sabbath* was differently circumstanced from any other part of the Mosaic institutions. It assumed a mixed character. In its main features it belonged to an unalterable moral code. In other particulars, it bore a merely Jewish and ceremonial character. In the former respect therefore it continues unchanged; in the latter, its authority died away with the peculiar dispensation to which it belonged.

Although these conclusions are derived from clear premises, yet in point of fact the change from the Mosaic to the Christian sabbath, was a gradual work. The Jews who believed in Christ were very slow to give up the practices of their ancestors, and under their influence, even the Gentile believers were prone to forsake the true ground of the Christian's hope, and to place their dependence on the ceremonies of an obsolete law. It was by degrees only—as the light of the gospel more and more abounded—that the primitive Christians escaped from all the shackles of Judaism, and rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

As a matter of course, therefore, the Jewish believers in the earliest age of Christianity, con-

tinued (as Ignatius expresses it) to *sabbatize*;[1] and it is probable that many of their Gentile brethren were accustomed to the same practice. Whatsoever religious service any other day of the week might bring with it, they kept the seventh day as their sabbath, and observed it with those ceremonial forms and that legal strictness which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation. In the mean time, however, the Christian sabbath was arising from a sure foundation, lifting up its head by degrees above the Jewish ritual, and putting in an irresistible claim on the regard and attention of all believers in Jesus.

Our Lord with a criminal on either side of him, was crucified on the sixth day of the week, and at the time of his death, the preparation for the ensuing sabbath was just commencing. Under these circumstances, the Jews, who in the very depth of their most flagrant national crime, were zealous for the letter of the law, besought Pilate that the legs of the sufferers might be broken, and their bodies removed from the cross much more speedily than was customary among the Romans. They were full of anxiety lest the sabbath should be polluted. Even Mary Magdalen and her two friends, who had prepared sweet spices to anoint the body of their Lord, duteously observed the sabbath, and kept back their tribute of pious affection until the following morning.[2] That sabbath-day was indeed one of no common dignity; for it occurred during the passover week,

[1] *Ep. ad Magnes.* c. 9. [2] Mark xvi, 1. &c.

and being the second day of the feast—the 16th of Nisan—was distinguished by the solemn wave-offering before the Lord, of the first sheaf of the Jewish harvest.[3]

But although this was a "high day," one of peculiar celebrity and joyfulness, to the Jews in general—to the disciples of Jesus, it was a day of sorrow, darkness, and dismay. They had forsaken their master in the hour of extreme danger, and were now scattered and hidden. Their expectation of the glorious reign of their Messiah had been utterly disappointed. The proofs which he had displayed of his divine power, had given place, as they imagined, to his defeat and destruction. The Lord of life and glory, whom they had confessed to be the Son of God, appeared to have become a prey to his enemies. He had undergone a cruel and shameful death. His body was lain in the sepulchre, and all their faith and hope were buried with him. How dark a day in their calendar was their sabbath day become! Nor can it be forgotten by Christians, in any age of the church, that it was during the seventh day of the week—the old sabbath of the Jews—that our glorious Head and Saviour, continued under the dominion of *death and the grave*. No wonder, that this should cease to be the appointed period for the *festal worship* of God's children!

But what a glorious morning was that which next dawned on the infant church of Christ—

3 Levit. xiii, 10. John xix, 31.

the morning of *the first day of the week*. The women who went at a very early hour to the sepulchre, found no dead body there; but in the place of it, two angels sitting, clothed in white raiment, who[4] told them that their Lord was risen.[5] He had broken the bands of death asunder, and had triumphed over the grave. The sun of righteousness who had been hidden, even from the eye of faith during a dark night of sorrow, was again appearing in his native splendour. As God the father hallowed the seventh day on which he rested, and marked it for his own—as the "birth day" of the world—so the Son of God was now distinguishing with peculiar honour the day of the *new creation*, on which his lowest humiliation was exchanged for victory, and the atonement made for sin triumphantly confirmed.[6]

Four times on that day, he condescended to manifest himself to his followers; first to the women who "held him by his feet and worshipped him;"[6] next to Peter;[7] then to the two disciples, whose hearts burned within them, as he talked with them on the way to Emmaus, and to whom he was revealed in the breaking of bread;[8] and lastly to a company of ten of his apostles; "Then the same day in the evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto

4 John xx, 12. 5 Rom. iv, 25.
6 Matt. xxviii, 9. 7 Luke xxiv, 34.
8 Luke xxiv, 13—33.

them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord; then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."[2] On this occasion was, for the first time fulfilled the gracious declaration of Jesus to his disciples, that where they were gathered together in his name, *there would he be "in the midst of them."*[1] Then also was another of his promises accomplished: "*I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*"[2]

Thus arose and thus concluded the first Christian sabbath. And when was the second? According to the original law, by which every recurring seventh day was hallowed, it must of course have taken place on that day se'nnight. Accordingly, it appears that the apostles were then again gathered together in one company. "And *after eight days again* his disciples were within and Thomas with them: then came Jesus and stood in the midst, the doors being shut, and said, Peace be unto you."[3]

When any circumstance occurred, a week after another, the Jews were accustomed to call this interval of time, "an eight days," including in their reckoning, both the days which were the objects of notice. Such par-

[2] John xx, 19—22.
[2] John xvi, 22.
[1] Matt. xviii, 20.
[3] John xx, 26.

ticularly was the style of Josephus.[3] Since therefore the first appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples was on the first day of one week, it follows that his second appearance is here described as occurring on the same day of the week succeeding. How memorable was the conversation, which on this latter occasion, took place between the Lord and his apostle Thomas! "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him Thomas because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."[4]

A third occasion on which the disciples came together after the resurrection of Christ, was that on which the Lord himself assembled with them at Bethany, or on Mount Olivet—a meeting which terminated with his *glorious ascension*.[5]

The period which elapsed between our Lord's resurrection and ascension, is described as

3 "The phrase μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ signifies after another week. So the Jews express a week by *eight days*. So *Josephus Ant*, lib. vii, c. 9, having said ἀπὸ ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ (every eight days) presently explains it by ἀπὸ σαββάτου ἐπὶ σάββατον (from week to week)." *Hammond* in loc. So *Grotius*, *Gill*, &c. &c. In like manner the French call a fortnight, *quinze jours*. A similar idiom occurs in Luke ix, 28. *Comp.* Matt. xvii, 1. and Mark ix, 2.

4 John xx, 29. 5 Acts i, 4—12.

"forty days."[6] This is a period of which frequent mention is made in the sacred history. The flood was "forty days" upon the earth; Moses was "forty days" in the mount; Elijah went "forty days" in the strength of the meat which the angel provided for him; Christ fasted "forty days" in the wilderness. Now as the Hebrews were accustomed to reckon their time by weeks—from sabbath to sabbath—it seems very probable that the term "forty days" denotes a *round number*, and is in fact a mere synonyme for "*six sabbaths or weeks*." If so, the ascension took place six weeks after the resurrection, and therefore on the first day of the week. This conclusion is in some measure confirmed by the very fact that the disciples were then assembled; for not only do we find them meeting together on the first day of the week twice before this event, but we shall presently see that they maintained the same practice *on the very week following*.

How blessed and solemn must have been this last meeting of Jesus with his chosen followers! It was then that he gave them his final commission to go and preach the gospel to all nations, cheered them with the promise of his perpetual presence, and declared that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost "*not many days*" afterwards.[7] "And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusa-

[6] Acts i, 3. [7] Acts i, 5—8.

lem wit[h] great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."[7]

The disciples were commanded by their Lord to tarry at Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high." The period during which they had to wait for the promise of the Father, appears to have been exactly one week, and in the course of it they appointed Matthias to the apostleship, in the place of Judas. From the history of that transaction, it appears that the infant church then consisted of one hundred and twenty persons, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, *they were all with one accord in one place.*"[8]

Now it is certain that this renewed assembly of the believers took place on the "Lord's day"—the first of the week—on which, in that year, the Pentecost occurred. The reckoning which proves this fact is very simple. Our Saviour's last paschal supper was on the evening which terminated, or, (according to the reckoning of the Jews) *succeeded*, the fifth day of the week. That fifth day was the 14th of Nisan, on which the Passover was slain.[9] He was crucified on the sixth day; and the following *seventh day*, was, as we have already remarked, the second of the feast and the 16th of Nisan, on which the wave-sheaf was offered to the Lord. Now from the time of this solemnity, seven *complete* weeks were to be

[7] Luke xxiv, 51—53. [8] Acts ii, 1.
[9] Mark xiv. 12; *comp.* Levit. xxiii, 5.

numbered; and the day which followed was the fiftieth day, *or the Pentecost*, on which was celebrated the feast of the first fruits. "From the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering seven sabbaths (or weeks) shall be *complete*:[1] even unto *the morrow after the seventh sabbath* shall ye number *fifty days*: and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord."[2]

Since, in the present instance, the wave-offering was on the sabbath day, the appointed interval did not expire until the termination of that day *seven weeks*. At six o'clock in the evening, when the seventh sabbath day went out, the Pentecost began, and it was "fully come" the next morning—on the first day of the week.

It appears to have been about nine o'clock on that memorable morning, that the Holy Ghost descended upon the gathered company of the disciples of Jesus.[3] The gift of prophecy and tongues was then poured forth in abundance, and amidst the throng of strangers from many different parts of the world, every one heard, in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God. The apostle Peter more especially, being filled with the Holy Ghost, preached with so much effect to the assembled multitude, that about three thousand souls were added, on that single day to the church of the Redeemer.[4] Thus was the first

1 Heb. תְּמִימֹת Sept. ὁλοκλήρους.
2 Levit. xxiii, 15, 16. 3 Acts ii, 15.
4 Acts ii, 41.

day of the week again pointed out, by the [illegible] vine finger, as the day of Christian worship, and was blessed and honoured by the Lord of THE SABBATH. He who had risen from the dead and had appeared to his disciples on that day, and who, as it occurred from week to week, had assembled with their company, had completed the hallowing of the Christian Sabbath, by the mission of the COMFORTER.

After the first day of the week had been so repeatedly distinguished by a display of divine power and goodness, it was natural that the disciples should regard it as a day peculiarly the LORD'S; and that in the remembrance of his resurrection and ascension, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, they should, thenceforth, make a regular use of it for their solemn assemblies.

That the Christian churches, in apostolic times, were in the habit of meeting together at stated periods for the two purposes of worship and brotherly communion, there can be no doubt. In the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians we have a lively description, first, of their meetings for worship,[5] and, secondly, of their *love feasts*,[6] when they brake their bread and drank their wine in solemn commemoration of the death of Jesus. Now that these meetings took place on the *first day of the week*, we are furnished with incidental evidence in the same epistle. Paul commands

[5] See chap. xi, 1—20; [illegible] v. 23—40.
[6] Chap. xi, 20—34.

collections to be made at Corinth, "upon the *first day of the week*," for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and he expressly states that he had given the same directions to the churches of Galatia.[7] It is obvious that this particular day was fixed for these subscriptions, because the regular meetings of the church would afford the opportunity of their being easily gathered. Accordingly we find from Justin Martyr, that after the congregational worship of the early Christians on the Lord's day, money was always collected for the benefit of the poor.[8]

Another evidence that the stated meetings of the Christians, during the time of the apostles, were held on this day, occurs in the history of Paul's travels. It appears that after he left Philippi, he crossed the sea and abode seven days at Troas. During the course of these seven days, we read of no meeting of the

7 1 Cor. xvi, 1, 2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as (God) hath prospered him, (παρ' ἑαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅ, τι ἂν εὐοδῶται,) that there be no gathering when I come." As there were to be no gatherings when the apostle came, it is plain that the collections were to be made previously, on the first days of the week. Every one who subscribed on these occasions, is represented by the apostle, as laying up in store a treasure for himself. So in 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19, those who are "ready to distribute, willing to communicate," are described as "*laying up in store for themselves* (ἀποθησαυρίζοντας) a good foundation against the time to come."

8 *Apol.* i, cap. 67. Ed. Ben. p. 83.

church; but on the last of them, which was the *first day of the week*, the disciples came together to break bread." Nor was this the only object of their assembling. It appears that they also met for the purpose of worship and Christian instruction; for we read that "Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." The *religious meeting* held on this occasion, appears to have ended with the sudden accident which befel Eutychus, one of the congregation. After this event, when Paul "was come up again and had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."[9]

These passages afford an evidence that the keeping of the Lord's day had then become a very general practice among the believers in Christ. The day was observed not merely at Jerusalem, where the resurrection of Jesus and the effusion of the Holy Spirit had taken place, but in distant countries or cities where the apostles had planted churches—for example, at Troas, in Galatia, at Corinth. And here we ought to mark the doctrine of the apostle Paul on the subject of the *Jewish sabbaths*.

When the apostle wrote, Jerusalem was still standing, and these sabbaths were still regularly observed. Now Paul appears to have been convinced, at an earlier date than many of his brethren, that the shadows of the law were no longer binding. While, therefore,

[9] Acts xx, 6—11.

he dealt very tenderly with the Jewish believers, and forbad not their adherence to the practices of their forefathers, he plainly declared that Christians were free to pursue their own course, and that no man might judge them in relation to these ordinances. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, (in the Greek "*the sabbaths*,"[1]) which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ."[2] The word "sabbaths" has been understood by some commentators as here importing the Jewish *festivals in general*. But I conceive it points more especially to the days set apart, under the law, for rest and holy convocations, and more especially to the *seventh days of the week*. No Christian was any longer bound to observe these sabbaths, or to practise the ceremonies by which they were distinguished. All that appertained peculiarly to the Mosaic dispensation had now passed away: the shadow was exchanged for the substance: and the day on which Jesus rose from the dead had been hallowed by the Lord himself for his own worship, and for the rest and religious edification of his believing children.

This day was called among the primitive Christians, as well as generally by the ancient fathers of the church, the *Lord's day*; partly because it was appointed as a memorial of his

1 των σαββατων. 2 Col. ii, 16, 17.

resurrection, and partly because it was peculiarly dedicated to his service. It was towards the close of the apostolic age, and long after the destruction of Jerusalem, that the apostle John thus designated the Christian sabbath. When banished in his old age to the Isle of Patmos, and there separated from communion with his brethren, he appears to have been careful, even in his solitude, to keep that day holy; for he informs us that he was "*in the spirit on the Lord's day*," when he heard behind him the voice of Christ, and received the messages which he was afterwards to deliver to the churches.[3] Doubtless, it was to the apostle a time of deep retirement of mind; and wonderful indeed were the visions to which on that hallowed occasion his eye of faith was opened. The Lord of the sabbath was again honouring the day which he had chosen for himself.

Having stated the whole of the evidence afforded by the New Testament, respecting the rise and establishment of the Christian sabbath, I must now proceed to the consideration of uninspired records.

Among these must be reckoned the Catholic Epistle of *Barnabas*, although there is strong evidence of its genuineness, and its author was a companion of the apostles. Barnabas speculates on the coming of the Millennium after seven thousand years (from

[3] Rev. i, 10.

the creation) of labour and sorrow. "Wherefore," he adds, "we keep the *eighth day* (i. e. the first day of the week) as a joyful holy-day, on which day also Jesus rose from the dead."[4]

Ignatius (A. D. 101) in his epistle to the Magnesians, contrasts the Jewish practice of *sabbatizing* with *living according to the Lord's day on which our Life arose.*"[5] These expressions are probably descriptive of a *life* spent in holiness and virtue, after the likeness of the resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless, they contain a clear allusion to the keeping of the *Lord's day*, as distinguished from the observance of the Jewish sabbath. Precisely similar allusions are made by Clement of Alexandria, (A. D. 192,)[6] and Origen, (A. D. 230.)[7]

Our next witness is Pliny the younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia (A. D. 107). In his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan respecting the Christian martyrs, he states that certain persons who had been induced by the extremity of their sufferings to renounce their faith in Jesus, gave the following account of their former religion:—"That they were accustomed on *a stated day* to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves

4 Διὸ καὶ ἄγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδόην, εἰς εὐφροσύνην ἐν ᾗ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν.
Epist. Cath. Ed. Cotelerii, p. 47.

5 μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες ἐν ᾗ καὶ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν. *Cap.* v.

6 Strom. lib. vii. c. 12. Ed. Sylb. p. 744.

7 *Contra Celsum*, lib. viii, c. 22.

by a sacred obligation not to commit any wickedness; but on the contrary, to abstain from thefts, robberies, and adulteries; also not to violate their promise, or deny a pledge after which it was their custom to separate and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless meal. Here evidently were the meeting for worship and the commemorative supper, very much as they were practised by the Corinthian Christians in the days of Paul. But what was the *stated day*, when these things took place?

Clearly the *first day of the week*, as is proved by the very question which it was customary for the Roman persecutors to address to the martyrs—*Dominicum servasti?*—*Hast thou kept the Lord's day?* to which the answer usually returned was in substance as follows: Christianus sum intermittere non possum.—"*I am a Christian, I cannot omit it.*"[8]

An unquestionable evidence on this point is afforded us by Justin Martyr, who, in his apology addressed to the Emperor Antoninus, (A. D. 147,) gives a lively account of the Christian day of worship. "On the day called

8 "Quod essent soliti *stato die* ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem; sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium." Lib. x. ep. 97.

9 *Acts of Martyrs, in Bishop Andrewes on the Ten Commandments*, p. 264.

Sunday" he says "there is a meeting in one place of all the Christians who live either in the towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles (supposed to mean the *four gospels*) or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as is suitable. When the reader stops, the president pronounces an admonition, and exhorts to the imitation of these noble examples; after which we all arise and begin to pray."[1] Justin then describes the eucharistical meal, and the collections made for the poor, and concludes by explaining *why* this day of the week was chosen for their public worship. "We all meet together on the Sunday, because it is the *first day*—on which God turned the darkness (into light,) gave shape to the chaos, and made the world; and on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead."[2]

[1] *Apol.* I. cap. 67. Ed. Ben. p. 83. Τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγρούς μενόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συλλογὴ γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα μέχρι τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκεται, μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ· εἶτα παυσαμένου τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος, ὁ προεστὼς διὰ λόγου τὴν νουθεσίαν καὶ πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιεῖται· ἔπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες, καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν. The reader will observe from this passage that the early Christians in their public assemblies, prayed *standing*. It appears from Irenæus and Tertullian, that they had an objection to genuflexion on the Lord's day, because the upright position alone reminded them of his rising from the grave. *Resp. ad quæst.* 115 *ad orthodoxos*. Ed. Ben. p. 349. *Tertull. de Coron. Mil.* cap. 3.

[2] Τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν κοινῇ πάντες τὴν συνέλευσιν

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, (A. D. [illegible] when writing to the Romans, informs [illegible] that the epistle of Clement their late bi[illegible] had been read in the church at Corinth, [illegible] *they were keeping the Lord's holyday* [illegible] incidental allusion which proves that the [illegible] tice of observing that day was familiar b[illegible] the writer, and to those persons whom h[illegible] addressing.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, and with it of the whole Jewish polity, and during the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, it is probable that the *Lord's day* was universally recognized as the only Christian sabbath. Ignatius, as we have already remarked, contrasts this day with the old sabbath of the Jews; and while abundant evidence is afforded by the other authors whom we have now cited, that the first day of the week was kept as a solemn day of worship, no mention is made by any of them of the seventh day, as claiming any peculiar honours from Christians. Accordingly

ποιούμεθα ἐπειδὴ πρώτη ἐστὶν ἡμέρα, ἐν ᾗ ὁ Θεὸς τὸ σκότος καὶ τὴν ὕλην τρέψας, κόσμον ἐποίησε· καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος σωτὴρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη.

[3] τὴν σήμερον οὖν κυριακὴν ἁγίαν ἡμέραν διαγάγομεν ἐν ᾗ ἀναγινώσκομεν ὑμῶν τὴν ἐπιστολήν.

Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iv. c. 23.

Clement was one of Paul's companions. His first epistle to the Corinthians is considered to be a genuine production, and is particularly valuable, from the manner in which it authenticates the epistles of Paul; especially those to the Corinthians and to the Hebrews.

...aeus, bishop of Lyons, (A. D. 167,) expressly ...rts that the Lord's day was their *sabbath*. ...n the Lord's day *every one of us Christ-... keeps the sabbath*, meditating on the law, ... rejoicing in the works of God."[4] So also ...tullian, (A. D. 192,) while he makes fre-...nt mention of the keeping of the Lord's ..., speaks of the Jewish sabbaths as *foreign* to believers in Jesus.[5] Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, (A. D. 250,) takes no notice of the old sabbath, but repeatedly alludes to the Lord's day, as that which was kept holy among Christians.[6]

The witnesses whose testimony we have now adduced, were scattered over various countries. Barnabas, Justin, and Origen, lived in *Palestine*; Clement of Alexandria in *Egypt*; Pliny, (during his proconsulship,) in *Bithynia*; Ignatius in *Syria*; Dionysius in *Greece*; the persons to whom he wrote in *Italy*; Irenæus in *Gaul*; Tertullian and Cyprian in *Libya*. We may conclude therefore, that the practice of devoting the first day of the week to religious purposes, became during the first three centuries after the Christian era, *universal in the church of Christ*. So remarkable and extensive an uniformity could not have arisen from accident. It must surely have been founded

4 Quoted by Dwight, *Theology*, vol. iv. p. 26.

5 "Nobis quibus sabbata *extranea* sunt, et neomeniæ et feriæ a Deo aliquando dilectæ.....O melior fides nationum in suam sectam, quæ nullam solemnitatem Christianorum sibi vindicat, non *Dominicum diem*, non Pentecosten," &c. *De Idol.* cap 14. Ed. Semler, tom. iv. 167.

6 *De opere et eleemos.* Ed. Oxon. p. 203. Ep. 38, 63.

on some common principle, generally understood. Now I conceive that the principle in question could have been no other than the unalterable obligation of the fourth commandment—connected with an understanding (derived from the apostles themselves) that Christians were to keep *that* day of the week as their sabbath, on which Jesus had risen from the dead.

In the fourth century, Constantine (A. D. 316), the first of the Roman emperors who embraced Christianity, enjoined the religious observance of the Lord's day on all his own household, and commanded that it should be kept as a day of rest throughout the Roman empire.[7] He decreed, moreover, that the Christian soldiers in his armies, should be allowed the opportunity of performing their religious duties on that day, without molestation.

It is somewhat remarkable that Constantine also commanded the Jewish sabbath to be "honoured"[8]—a circumstance which, among many others, proves that at this period, a retrograde movement had taken place in the church, towards the obsolete rites of Judaism. In the Apostolic Constitutions, a spurious work supposed to have been the production of this century, frequent reference is made to the Mosaic sabbath, as well as to the Lord's day; and *both* are commanded to be kept as solemn fes-

[7] διὰ τοῦς ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν πολιτευομένοις ἅπασι σχολὴν ἀγεινναῖς ἐπωνύμοις τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμέρας διοδίδωσι. *Euseb. in Vita Const.* lib. iv. c. 18.

[8] ἐμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς τοῦ Σαββάτου τιμᾶν. *Ibid.*

tivals, and as days of public worsaip.[9] Hence it became necessary for those persons who perceived the inconsistency of such a combination, to assert the superior claims of the Christian sabbath. Accordingly, we find the celebrated Athanasius (A.D. 326) renouncing the authority of the old sabbath, and asserting that the Lord himself *had exchanged it for the Lord's day.*[1] One of the canons of the council of Laodicea (A.D. about 350) is also very express on this subject. "Christians must not Judaize, or cease from work on the sabbath (*i. e.* on the seventh day of the week), but must work on that same day (it being allowed that part of it should be occupied in public worship). *Rather must they prefer in honour the Lord's day, and, if it be in their power, must rest in it as Christians.* But if they be found Judaists, let them be accursed from Christ."[2]

The reserve here made—"if it be in their power"—must be understood as an allowance for works of necessity. It appears that Constantine regarded agricultural labour to be of

[9] Vid. lib. vii, c. 23, &c.

[1] μετέθηκε δὲ ὁ Κύριος τὴν σαββάτου ἡμέραν εἰς κυριακήν. *De Semente*, Ed. Colon. tom. i. p. 1060.

[2] *Canon.* xxix. Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ χριστιανοὺς Ἰουδαΐζειν, καὶ ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ σχολάζειν, ἀλλὰ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ τὴν δὲ κυριακὴν προτιμῶντας, εἴγε δυναίντο, σχολάζειν ὡς χριστιανούς. Εἰ δὲ εὑρεθεῖεν Ἰουδαΐσταί, ἔστωσαν ἀνάθεμα παρὰ Χριστῷ.

Mansii Coll. Concill. tom. ii. p. 570.

this description;[3] but a higher standard, in relation to this point, was afterwards established, as will appear from the following declaration issued by Leo, the bishop of Rome (A.D. 440), on behalf of the Christian church in his day:—"We ordain, according to the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles thereby directed, that on the sacred day, wherein our own integrity was restored, all do rest and cease from labour; that neither husbandmen nor other persons on that day, put their hands to forbidden works. For if the Jews did so much reverence their sabbath, which was but a shadow of ours, are not we, which inhabit the light and truth of grace, bound to honour that day which the Lord himself hath honoured, and hath therein delivered us both from dishonour and from death? Are we not bound to keep it singular and inviolable, well contenting ourselves with so liberal a grant of the remainder, and not encroaching upon that one day, which God hath chosen to his own honour? Were it not reckless neglect of religion, to make that very day common, and to think we may do with it as with the rest?"[4]

To these testimonies it would be easy to add a multitude of others; for the keeping of the Lord's day as a time of rest and worship, is interwoven with the history of the church of Christ from its earliest origin to the present time; but having traced the practice which

[3] *Cod.* lib. iii. tit. 12, l. 3. Hooker, Eec. Pol. book v. vol. ii. 379.

[4] *Constit.* liv. *Hooker, Ibid.*

prevailed in this respect during five centuries, we may now content ourselves with an appeal to modern Christianity. The custom of keeping the first day of the week as the Christian sabbath, which lived even through the darkest ages of the church, was confirmed by an universal though tacit consent, at the period of the Reformation. Since that time, believers in Jesus of every name, Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, have maintained this practice as a leading feature in their Christian profession. All, on some ground or other, have considered it to be their duty to allot one day in seven to religious services; and all have agreed in observing the first day of the week, as the most appropriate for this sacred purpose. Nor shall we be deemed presumptuous in asserting, that He who, on the day of Pentecost, poured forth his Holy Spirit on the infant church, has condescended, in every succeeding age, to bless the assemblies of his people with a measure of the same influence.

When we call to mind, that a right use of the Christian sabbath has been the means appointed in the order of Providence, for the conversion and sanctification (as we may fully believe) of a vast multitude of immortal souls, we shall be little disposed to dispute the authority of the institution, or to doubt that the steadfast maintenance of it is consistent with the *will of God*.

It appears then—First, with respect to the *Jewish sabbath*; that although virtually abolished, as far as regards its peculiar features,

by the death of Christ, it continued for many years after that event to be observed by the Jews who believed in Jesus, and even by some of their Gentile brethren—that the apostle Paul plainly laid down the principle, that *Christians* were at liberty to disuse it—that after the destruction of Jerusalem, and during the first three centuries of the history of the church, it probably fell into complete disuse among them—that although, under the renewed influence of Judaism, it revived for a time in the fourth century, the observance of it was quickly condemned, and has long since utterly disappeared in the church of Christ.

Secondly, with respect to the *Christian sabbath*, that it arose on the very day of our Lord's resurrection—that it was supported from week to week by the sanction of his presence, in the assemblies of his people—that it was hallowed, probably, by the glories of his ascension, and certainly by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—that during the lives of the apostles, it was the day on which the churches of Christ met for the purposes of worship and communion—that John called it "the Lord's day," and was "in the Spirit" on it, in the Isle of Patmos—that in the succeeding age, it was alluded to as a day of religious solemnity by Pliny the younger, and clearly described as such by Justin, Dionysius, Irenæus, Tertullian, and other ancient fathers—that under the Emperor Constantine, it was observed as a sacred day of rest throughout the Roman empire—

that, in the fifth century, it was yet more distinctly recognised in its sabbatical character—that it has since been steadily maintained in every age of the church, and is still universally acknowledged by Christians—and finally, that the blessing which has rested on the use of it, affords, in addition to every other proof, a substantial evidence of its divine authority.

In conclusion let it be remarked, that while the sabbath of the Jew and that of the Christian serve the same purpose as a memorial of *creation*, it is the latter only which records the *blessings of redemption*. The Jew indeed is reminded by his sabbath of the deliverance of his forefathers from Egypt; but we are taught by *ours*, to meditate on a holier freedom, and to recollect an infinitely greater salvation—a freedom from the tyranny of sin and Satan; a salvation from the "bitter pains of eternal death." While we call to mind the glorious events which marked the origin, and have distinguished the course, of this institution, we can never cease to regard it as sacred to GOD—to the FATHER who *creates*; to the SON who *redeems*; and to the HOLY GHOST who *anoints and sanctifies*. The more justly therefore, we appreciate our "access" through the Son, "in one Spirit, unto the Father," the higher will be our value, and the warmer our affection, for the CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

CONCLUSION.

Some persons who entertain a high view of the spirituality of the Gospel, regard the sabbath as an outward rite, in its nature figurative; and although they deem it expedient, and their duty because expedient, to assemble *on that day* for the purpose of public worship, a notion is nevertheless predominant with them that the institution itself, like every other shadow, is of no authority under the Christian dispensation. To the candid consideration of such persons, I venture to present the evidences contained in the preceding chapters. These, I trust, are sufficient to show that the setting apart of one day in seven, for the purposes of rest and worship, is a *divine ordinance* which was bestowed on our first parents; that this ordinance was observed by the patriarchs—was delivered to the Israelites as an essential part of their moral code—was exalted far above their whole ceremonial system—was maintained, in its true integrity, by the Saviour of men—and, finally, having been adapted to the peculiar character of the Gospel, has flourished in the Christian church, from its earliest origin to the present day.

With regard to the figurative nature of the sabbath, it may indeed be allowed that *one* of its purposes is to typify our heavenly rest; and like other types, it will cease to every one of us, when its antitype comes. Till then, in the very nature of things, its use and authority continue. In one point of view, indeed, the *perpetual sabbath* of the Christian may be said to be already begun; for his whole life ought to be devoted to the glory of his Creator; and *whatsoever* he does, should be done in the name of Jesus. Every day, every hour he lives, is the Lord's. But in our present imperfect condition, it would surely be a dangerous error so to apply this doctrine, as to disregard the *especial* claims of the Christian sabbath. Any man who should do so, would too probably be found, within a short period of time, *wholly for the world*, instead of *wholly for God*.

It is, indeed, a powerful argument for the divine authority of this institution, that as on the one hand, a conspicuous blessing rests on the use of it, so on the other, the neglect or perversion of it never fails to be followed by vice, misery, and confusion. Ungodliness is the worst of all foes to moral virtue and civil order—to the decency, harmony, and happiness, of society; and ungodliness and sabbath-breaking act and react. The former naturally leads to the latter, and the latter confirms and aggravates the former.

That this effect is produced even on minds devoted to intellectual objects, is unquestion-

ably true, but it becomes more notorious among those classes of men whose education is limited, and whose habits are but little refined. Every one who is accustomed to communicate, in our jails and other such places, with the refuse of society—with the most abandoned and profligate of men—must be aware that *sabbath-breaking* is, very commonly, a first step to every species of crime. Nor was the curse which rests on the neglect and abuse of the sabbath much less conspicuous, when an attempt was made to remodel the law and to alter its proportions. The sages of the French Revolution, as the reader is probably well aware, substituted one day of rest in *ten*, for one in *seven*. And what was the consequence? So great a degree of disorder and wretchedness, that the people were driven by mere necessity, speedily to take refuge again in their ancient practice.

These remarks naturally lead us to some further enquiry into the duties of the sabbath, and into the proper method of keeping the day "holy."

The first great principle which ought always to be kept in view, in relation to this subject, is that every seventh day (after six days of work) is "the sabbath of the LORD our GOD;" and is, therefore, in a peculiar manner and degree, to be devoted to his service. It is true that we serve God indirectly, while we are rightly pursuing our temporal avocations; for they are a part of the duty

of life. But on the sabbath day, the service of our Creator must be at once direct and uninterrupted.

In order to this end it is of great importance that we should habituate ourselves, whenever the sabbath recurs, and even on its near approach, to break the trains of worldly thought, and to divest the *mind* of the cares and interests of business. "Vacare Deo"—to be empty for God—must then be our constant motto. Young people would find their religious welfare, and even their worldly happiness, greatly promoted by the formation of such a habit. Let no man, however, suppose that he will succeed in this object, unless he cordially embraces and deeply feels the great truths of religion. We must be much with Christ every day of our lives, in order to be fitted to commune with him uninterruptedly, on the sabbath day. Nothing but the love of God will ever drive the love of the world out of our hearts. But when we have come (as an able writer expresses it) under "the expulsive power" of this "new affection," we shall find it comparatively easy, as it will ever be delightful, to lay aside our temporal cares on the arrival of the day of rest, and to present to the influence of holy things, the length and breadth of an undivided mind. Nor shall we fail to be rewarded for such a practice even in our temporal concerns; for to these we shall afterwards return with our feelings rectified and our understanding cleared—with far greater ability for effectually and *rightly* con-

ducting them, than we should otherwise have possessed.

The mind being thus given up, on the sabbath, to the service of God and to the pursuit of our heavenly inheritance, will above all things be led into *communion* with the Creator. Prayer on our own account and intercession on account of others, which to the Christian form a part of every day's duty, will often on the sabbath be more extended than usual, and will sometimes be found to arise from the heart with that increase of holy fervour—that renewal of faith and love—which a day devoted to religious purposes is calculated to produce. Nor will the pious Christian, on the day of rest, forget to review the past week, and to enter upon that deliberate and candid examination of himself, which will be sure to lead both to humiliation and devotion. On these occasions of solemn retrospect, a sense will sometimes be bestowed on him, both of his own vileness and of the holiness of God; and the secret language of his heart will be like that of Job, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."[1]

The private perusal of Scripture, like private prayer, must be regarded as an important *daily* duty. Yet when we reflect on the temporal cares with which some persons are surrounded, and especially on the hourly occupation of the

[1] Job xlii, 5, 6.

labouring classes, we may well rejoice in the weekly recurrence of a day, on which even the most busy persons may read the Bible deliberately—may compare its corresponding parts, mark its harmony, and drink deeply of its spirit. To a considerable proportion of the community, the Scriptures would be comparatively of little use, were it not for the sabbath; and on the other hand, the sabbath would be far less profitable, if we did not possess the Bible. These precious gifts of God, in combining to promote the welfare of mankind, most materially enhance the value of each other.

But the most important duty of the sabbath is of a public nature. On this hallowed day, we are bound by a sacred obligation, to manifest our allegiance to the King of kings, by publicly assembling in order to worship him. It is through this means especially, that the sabbath becomes a sign between us and our God, by which we are marked as his children—by which it is clearly shewn to the world around us, that *He* is the God who *sanctifies* us, and whom we esteem it our highest privilege to serve and adore.[2] In the punctual performance of this duty we may be encouraged, by calling to mind the holy convocations of ancient Israel—the synagogue worship of a later date, regularly maintained even by a degenerate people—the mercies of the day of Pentecost—the uniform practice of the primitive Christians—and above all the example of our Saviour

[2] Exod. xxxi, 13.

himself. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."[3]

On a subject so familiar to the mind of every Christian as that of public worship, many remarks cannot be necessary. It may not however be useless to observe, 1. That this is a duty which demands of us *zeal* and *diligence*. It is a miserable symptom of a luke-warm spirit, when trifling difficulties detain us from our places of worship, or prevent our attending them, where the opportunity is afforded, *twice in the day*. We must endeavour to press through these obstructions in some small measure of that faith, which as our Saviour declared, is sufficient to remove mountains;[4] and above all, we must pray that our *chief* difficulty —the natural aversion of the heart to all things holy and heavenly—*may be thoroughly overcome* by the *love of God*. Nor ought we to *forget* that *diligence* which is necessary in order to our constant attendance of public worship, is equally so for its right performance. On these occasions, the devotional feelings should have their full sway, and the mind be directed, with all its energies, to the performance of our highest duty. The *whole man* ought then to be presented, "a living sacrifice" unto God.

[3] Heb. x, 24, 25. [4] Matt. xvii, 20.

2. *Sincerity* and *spirituality* are qualities of mind, absolutely essential to our public as well as private devotions. Let us ever remember that "God is not mocked;" and that it is utterly in vain for us to draw nigh to him with our lips, or to use any other outward form of worship, while our hearts are far from him. Under the dispensation of the Gospel, the heart is the only altar from which can arise with acceptance, the incense of adoration. The hour "*now is*" when the "true worshippers" must "worship the Father in spirit and in truth;" and it is an animating reflection, that "the Father *seeketh* such to worship him."[5] By the gentle influence of his Spirit, he invites and allures his children to draw near to him; and when they are dismayed in the view of their own vileness, and of his perfect holiness, he cheers them with the remembrance, that an access is opened for them, through "the blood of the covenant,"—that it is their duty as well as their privilege, *freely* to plead the name of that Saviour, who "is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."[6]

3. Among the ancient Hebrews the sabbath was a joyful festival; and it was one of the precepts of the early fathers of the church that no man should *fast* on the "Lord's day."[7] The reflecting Christian will indeed observe on that day, more than usual moderation in his meals, that he may not occasion labour to others; but the sabbath, and especially its ordinances

[5] John iv. 23. [6] John xiv. 6.

[7] "Die dominico jejunium nefas ducimus." *Tertull. de Corona Mil.* c. 3.

of public worship, will be to him a *spiritual feast*, and will often remind him of that ancient promise—"In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."[8] In frequenting the solemn assemblies of the Lord's people, we ought to cultivate a joyful and thankful spirit; to train our minds to a vivid perception of the "*beauty* of holiness;" and to *delight ourselves* in the worship of God. Let us ever remember that on these occasions we meet for the purpose of commemorating the glories of *creation*, the wisdom and goodness of *providence*, and the wonders of *redeeming love*. Let us *rejoice* in the presence of that Saviour who is risen from the dead—is enthroned in glory at the right hand of the Father—is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities;"—and "ever liveth to make intercession" for his people.

4. Immediately connected with the duty of public worship, is the blessing of Christian communion. Ours is not the religion of hermits. It is distinguished by a social character. It is enlivened by the influence of that pure love which cements together all the members of the body of Christ, (whatsoever their name or mode of worship,) under one holy Head. Next to the grace of God, there is nothing by which we are so much assisted in our Christian course, as by the "unity of the Spirit, in

[8] Isa. xxv. 6.

the bond of peace." Now during the course of their daily temporal engagements, Christians are of necessity much separated from each other; and are left to pursue, as God enables them, their individual course of duty. But the sabbath day calls them together in companies, "with one accord in one place." And then for a time all outward distinctions amongst them are profitably forgotten. Male and female, parent and child, master and servant, meet before God on common principles. They are animated by the same hope; they are striving after the same inheritance; they bow down as unworthy sinners, before the same God; they confide for acceptance in the same precious blood; and thus are they brought to feel that they are ONE in Christ Jesus.

It must, I think, be evident to every one who is acquainted with the course of this world, that were it not for the constant recurrence of the sabbath day, our public worship would be curtailed and frustrated, and our religious communion lamentably marred. In such a case there is too much reason to believe that the church of Christ would soon lose her distinctive marks of devotion and charity, and the strength of her children be scattered and die away.[9]

9 It is a most desirable practice adopted by many religious societies, to meet for the purpose of public worship at least once in the course of the week, as well as on the sabbath. Although these assemblies are the means of much edification, they are seldom found to serve the pur-

To the ministers of the gospel, under every name, if they rightly perform their duty, the first day of the week seldom fails to be one of considerable exertion. Like the priests in the temple of Jerusalem who defiled the sabbath and were blameless, they are fully justified in pursuing the *labour* of their calling, by the holiness of the object to which it is directed. Nor dare they do otherwise; for every man who is truly called into this sacred service can say with the apostle Paul "WOE IS UNTO ME if I preach not the gospel."[1] It ought, however, to be observed that the sabbath day has a tendency, in a subordinate point of view, to convert every Christian into a minister of the gospel; for it becomes us all, if opportunity be afforded, to devote some portion of its hours to the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ. The instruction of children in the Holy Scriptures is a duty in which great numbers even of young persons, are now engaged on the sabbath day; and who can doubt that these labours of love are abundantly blessed to themselves, as well as to the objects of their care?

Another duty of the same character devolves peculiarly on heads of families. It is that of collecting their household together for the purpose of reading the Bible to them, and (as far

pose of congregational worship and communion, in their *full* extent. I believe that the persons who are the most diligent in performing this Christian duty, are precisely those who have the highest value for the *sabbath day*.

[1] Cor. ix, 16.

ability is given) of unfolding to their understanding, and impressing on their hearts, its sacred contents. The social acts of religion and worship ought indeed to find their place in the daily order of every Christian family. But on the evening of the sabbath, a longer time than usual, may often be devoted to this object; nor ought we to hesitate on such occasions to look beyond the limits of our own families, and to seek the company of our poor neighbours. The influence which during the course of the week we are accustomed to exercise over others for temporal purposes, ought on the sabbath day to *change its direction*, and be applied with an honest diligence to their spiritual good. If this rule were universally observed, how extensive would be its effect on the character and condition of society!

Having thus considered those duties of the sabbath, which are properly ranged under the head of *worship*, I shall proceed to make a few remarks on another branch of our subject. Those who believe that the fourth commandment is obligatory on every Christian, are bound to acknowledge, that *rest* as well as devotion is required of us on the sabbath-day, "*In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.*" Now, although the literal strictness of this precept is materially softened by the influence of the Gospel, it must be obvious to every serious observer,

that its true meaning and spirit are far too much disregarded in the present day. It is the destiny of man that he should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the sabbath is graciously bestowed upon him as a relief to that destiny. His mental energy and his bodily strength are to be renewed by its leisure; and God, who has thus bestowed upon man the substantial blessing of a periodical cessation from toil, has decreed the same privilege even to inferior animals. While, therefore, we make an allowance for temporal exigencies, and a still wider one for the calls of devotion and charity, we ought, on the sabbath day, to exercise great caution not to thwart the benevolent purposes of our Creator, by unnecessarily breaking the rest either of our servants, or of our cattle. The *domestic*, on that day, should find his business materially lessened; the *labourer* should enjoy, as far as possible, an uninterrupted rest; and the beast, which has served us faithfully during the week, should not be deprived of his share of the general repose.

Were the law of a gracious Creator in reference to this point more carefully observed, the servants in many families would be spared that labour on the sabbath, which now too often prevents their attending to any religious duty. Nor would our country be any longer disgraced by the very prevalent practice of both private and public travelling, on the day appointed, in the order of Providence, for public worship and for the needful intermission of

a driver and ostler, who now cessation from his hourly activity, hen be found frequenting his place of nip; and many a poor animal which now pants under the lash on the sabbath, would then be permitted to recover strength for the ensuing six days of inevitable labour. To extend our views to a greater distance,—what a shameful rebellion against the law of God, is the denial of a *sabbath* to our colonial slaves; and how deep the guilt of that nation which permits the continuance of so impious a cruelty!

The appointment of every seventh day for repose from labour, is calculated to remind us of the *mild* and *benevolent* nature of the sabbatical law. There is indeed no harshness in its genuine meaning; and while every thing, on that day, ought to be avoided which has any tendency to produce a forgetfulness of its duties, it is nevertheless true that one of its objects is *lawful refreshment*. While we refrain from doing our own pleasure, and turn away our foot from every dissipating amusement, on God's holy day,[2] we may rest satisfied that the hour of relaxation, the retired walk, and the calm contemplation of the beauties of nature, are in just accordance with its character and purpose. So long as they interfere with no duty of worship or charity, and are enjoyed in the *remembrance of God*, they are in themselves desirable, and consist with the true spirit of the law.

2 Isaiah lviii. 13.

67957

It is of especial importance that a right view of the sabbath should be implanted in the minds of children; and that when the common course both of their studies and their amusements is suspended, they should be taught to regard it as a day of peculiar *happiness*. We must lead them onwards in their Christian course, with a gentle and alluring hand, and avail ourselves of every recurring sabbath, for imbuing them with a sense of the *pleasures* of religion.

Finally, it will not be irrelevant to remind the fervent and devoted Christian, that the Lord of the sabbath has not appointed it as a period of *arduous toil*, even in the pursuit of religion; but rather as a day of joyful commemoration, and of happy reviving communion with HIMSELF. Tranquillity and moderation in the works of charity are desirable on the sabbath, as well as diligence; and whether we are engaged in delivering the message of the Gospel to others, or in receiving those glad tidings, we can then wear no better ornament than that of a meek and quiet spirit. While, therefore we pursue all the duties of the day with zeal and fidelity, let us not forget to enjoy the privilege of *mental repose*. Let us cultivate a *contemplative* mind; and let us pray to be made partakers of the "*peace of God which passeth all understanding*."[3]

Having thus endeavoured to trace the private, the social, and the public duties of the

[3] Phil. iv. 7.

ing considered the institution
haracter of a day of worship and
est, we may now conclude this little
by remarking, that in *both* these re-
spects the sabbath is a type of heaven. The
apostle is evidently speaking of our final in-
heritance, when, after alluding to the rest of
God after the creation, and to that of the Is-
raelites in the promised land, he adds, "There
remaineth therefore a *rest* (or, as in the Greek,
the keeping of a sabbath day[1]) to the people
of God."

The sabbath is the signal for ceasing ap-
pointed in the wisdom of Providence, not only
for reminding us of the past mercies of our God,
but for keeping alive our expectation of future
and never-ending bliss. The more watchful
and diligent we are in making a right use of
this divine institution, the better shall we be
prepared for its fulfilment in the world to
come. There shall those who live and die in
JESUS, unite with the whole church triumph-
ant in pure and perpetual worship. There
shall they cease from their sorrow, their con-
flict, and their labour; and enjoy in the pre-
sence of their God and Saviour, A GLORIOUS
AND ETERNAL REST.

[1] σαββατισμὸς, Heb. iv. 9.

NORWICH:
PRINTED BY WILKIN AND FLETCHER,
1831.

00067957

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016